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The best in interior design

THE CHRISTMAS ISSUE
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HOMES



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COVER HOME

photo WONG WEI LIANG
art direction YEW XIN YI & LIM YI LING

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year end bonanza!

December is our favourite time of the year because we get to shop for you! We've rounded up some of the best gifts out there for every home. You're sure to find something for the special people in your life.

Come with us into the kitchen of Transparent Apron, the very successful underground supper club in KL. They share with us their take on the Christmas dinner. This is also the time of the year to think about renovations for 2015, so we've put together a renovation special.

Last but not least, we present the much awaited Designer Showcase 2014, where we showcase the best talents in interior design. We feature five great projects, starting on page 49.

Merry Christmas and have a blessed year ahead!

Do let us know what you think of our new look. Drop us a message on our FB page (www.facebook.com/HomeandDecorMY) or e-mail us at homeanddecor@bluinc.com.my.

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ELAINE DONG
EDITOR





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DESIGNER SHOWCASE 2014
Our annual special is back, with new ideas and inspiration.



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OCCASIONAL TABLE
Choose the best table for your home.



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NOW

Time will Tell

The simple task of telling time is elevated with the handmade clocks of Barcelona-based brand Nomon. The creations of designers Jose Maria Reina and Mario Ruiz revolve around minimalist yet super-stylish contemporary forms, one example being the Delmori clock, which is made with walnut, steel and fibreglass. It has a timeless quality that will undoubtedly outlast any trend.

Nomon is available at Proof Living.



text MAVIS ANG photo PROOF LIVING

Medici Chair

Why We Love It

The Medici is a low chair with generous proportions and a comfortable recline, and boasts a sculptural quality with its irregular, angular form and cutting-edge design. Although it may appear lightweight and collapsible, the chair is sturdy, thanks to a solid wood frame. Its design makes use of only three-quarter-inch-thick planks, a reference to the standard thickness of wood planks when they are cut from the log.

Who Designed It

Konstantin Grcic designed the Medici for Italian furniture brand Mattiazzi, a family-owned company specialising in wood furniture. This piece brings him back to his carpentry roots, as he trained as a cabinet-maker before studying design. The award-winning industrial designer has also designed furniture, lighting and products for renowned brands such as Flos, Muji and Vitra. Some of his works are part of the permanent collections in the Centre Pompidou in Paris and the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

What It Inspired

First unveiled at the Milan Furniture Fair in 2012, its huge success led the designer to expand the range to include a stool and a side table last year. They follow the same language as the chair, appearing to have origami-like folds and angled protruding legs. "Wings" form the seat of the stool, while the side tables have "discs" for tops. ●





The stool, part of the expanded Medici collection, has "wings" for a seat that are made of angled planks supported by tripod legs.

text LOUISA CLARE LIM photos MATTIAZZI AND POMELO



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ART

EMI EU

THE PROGRAMME DIRECTOR OF THIRD FLOOR HERMES ART SPACE BELIEVES THAT ART – BE IT IN A SHOW OR AT HOME – SHOULD ALWAYS CAPTURE YOUR HEART



TOP
Show Flat 04 by Hong Kong artist Stanley Wong uses the region's iconic striped tarpaulin sheeting to create an apartment of nostalgia.

The Fondation d'entreprise Hermes, which supports art entrepreneurs on a global scale, manages dedicated exhibition spaces within Hermes boutiques around the world.

One such boutique is Third Floor Hermes, where Emi organises twice-a-year shows and oversees the selection of artists for an engaging line-up of works. Artists she has shown include Joo Choon Lin from Singapore, Stanley Wong from Hong Kong and, most recently, Japanese artist Aiko Tezuka's textile installation pieces.

Emi, who is also the director of the Singapore Tyler Print Institute, shares the process of putting together an art collection.

How do you go about organising an exhibition?
The whole objective of Third Floor Hermes is to work with artists from around the world. We provide a platform for artists to do a site-specific exhibition.

My choice of artists and projects for a show is based on my appreciation of the artist's work. It's a little like buying art – it has to be something that touches your heart. I work with artists and projects that provoke me and move all my different senses.

I'm very excited to work with artists who have a very strong concept, and their works have to be intelligent, interesting and engaging. I'm not focused on the finished product, but am more interested in the concept and the process. I gravitate towards conceptual artists, but their output can be very varied, from video and sculptural installations to text and performance.

What are some of your favourite works so far?
I have a lot of art – unfortunately, most of them are in storage. But some of my favourites include works by Singaporean artists, such as the very first series of Heman Chong's book-cover paintings, and Ming Wong's first video work. (Both artists have been exhibited at Third Floor Hermes.)

How is the art at home different from what you would show in a public space?
Art at home is personal. Museums focus on educating and informing through their exhibitions. The shows and artworks target a specific demographic. Contemporary galleries often show works by artists they work with, which include the most recent creations. The gallery's aim is to place the works in private collections – that is, for the public to buy them.

What kind of art should be shown at home?
The art collection has to be a reflection of who you are or of the people living in that space.







You're essentially projecting an image of yourself and your family to people visiting your home.

Collecting art can be intimidating for the novice. How does one begin?

Novice collectors may not want to spend too much money on art they might regret. All collectors start with something more accessible, like prints. You can find prints of works by famous artists at affordable prices.

The more you know, the more choices you have. Even if you are not buying, go to art fairs, like the Affordable Art Fair in Singapore. It is very useful to see what is being offered in the market so you can compare. Go to museums and galleries; be informed and do your research.

When you like something, take your time and don't make hasty decisions. Write down the name of the artist you like, and go home to do some research. Galleries are happy for you to go back for another viewing. If you really like the work, then you should buy it.

My No. 1 advice is this: don't buy art thinking that you can make money out of it. You have to like it, and not think of it as a financial investment. ●

VISIT THE THIRD FLOOR HERMES ART SPACE AT LIAT TOWERS, SINGAPORE, TEL: +65-6738-9807.

ABOVE, LEFT
Tetraphilia by Hong Kong artist Nadim Abbas is a multi-sensory show of "tetra"-themed "objets d'art".

BELOW
Abbas' surreal landscape installation is made of drink cartons.

TOP, RIGHT
Japanese artist Aiko Tezuka's textile installation, Certainty/Entropy.

ABOVE, RIGHT
Flags blend into Wong's installation.



text WYN-LYN TAN profile photo STPI location photos EDWARD HENDRICKS FOR HERMES



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White Room bedlinens are made from high quality cotton, giving a natural feel against the skin. There are a total of six collections, each with unique designs and thread counts to suit different needs.

White Room's signature aromatherapy product comes in the form of essential oil, reed diffusers and scented candles. The Balance range, with its sweet lemony scent and rich floral notes, is popular amongst customers. Bath sets and lotions are available, too.

Also, look forward to several Christmas gift sets, available from December. They include the Aroma and Bath (scented candles and towels), Morgan towel set (bath, hand and face towels) and the Skin Loving set (bath towel, aroma shower get and lotion) and more. Prices range from RM80 to RM 280. White Room offers complimentary gift wrapping service.





TOP
The Aroma and Bath set includes a scented candle and towels.

BOTTOM
The Morgan gift set includes both hand and face towels.

WHITE ROOM IS IN PARKSON NU SENTRAL, 201, JALAN TUN SAMBANTHAN 50470, KUALA LUMPUR.

text NG YI XIANG photography PATRICK CHAN

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PEOPLE

ELECTRICAL CIRCUITS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF MEGAPOWER, RANDY THAM AND LEGRAND'S REGIONAL MARKETING MANAGER OF ASEAN COUNTRIES, LOUIS-BENOIT RUSTERHOLTZ TELL US ABOUT THEIR JOINT VENTURE.

Share with us a brief history of Megapower and Legrand.
L: Legrand originated in a small town in central France. It started out as a porcelain manufacturer in 1865. Since 1949, it has specialised in electrical materials and is now a leader in electrical infrastructure.

R: Megapower was founded in 1990 as an electrical distributor and began manufacturing PVC light piping in 1994.

L: Both companies started out as a family business. Megapower and Legrand have evolved and is now well established in Malaysia with a leading position in the market.

Could you tell us Legrand's venture into Malaysia and your journey to establish this specialise company?
L: Prior to the joint venture in 2011, Legrand had been in Malaysia for several years with a strong distribution base but with limited exposure. Megapower presents a good opportunity to develop in the industry.

What are some of the house brands Megapower and Legrand carry?
R: Some of the heavy duty brands we carry include Saga and PVC-Link. We also carry medium duty brands such as wireman.

L: Legrand carries French brands such as Cablofil which is known for its commercialised wire mesh cable trays.

What are your new products?
R: We recently launched the MCB, Belanko, Arteor and Mallia range with unique energy conserving properties. We have dimmers, automatic switches and socket outlets. The Arteor range has a total of seventeen colours and designs. Customers can choose the shape of the switch buttons, finish (available in luxurious leather, gold brass and various others) and functionalities depending on their needs. The switches from Mallia come in a variety of colours to express individual styles while Belanko caters to customers looking for conventional functions and designs.

Who are your target customers?
L: We have a wide range of products catering to corporate companies, homeowners, architects as well as hotels.

Is there a difference between the wants and needs of customers today as compared to their needs a few years back?
L: Due to technological advancement, customers today look into its functions and designs. With this, we provide more systems and automation solutions, for convenience. As compared to the times before, we now come out with innovative colours and designs.

What can we expect from Megapower Legrand in the future?
R: Everyone can expect us to develop a sustainable and leading brand, as we are doing in the rest of the world too.

L: We are trying to facilitate energy-saving systems in offices or monitor electricity consumption and to propose the practice of sustainability in the long run for a better future.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT WWW.LEGRAND.COM.MY







BELOW FROM LEFT
Arteor, Belanko and Mallia range.

text NG YI XIANG photos LEGRAND

CHECK OUT

Terracotta Tiles

COLOURFUL TILES THAT GIVE YOUR HOME A UNIQUE PERSONALISED TOUCH.

Terracotta Tiles offers a myriad of tiles for you to choose from – whether they are for the front porch, the swimming pool or the dining room. The retailer imports tiles from China, Vietnam, Thailand and Japan. Some are made in Malaysia. Regardless their provenance, theses tiles are stylish additions to your home. Among its vast offerings, the Artisan tiles catch our eye with traditional patterns handpainted by skilled artisans. The Glass Mosaic series, on the other hand, adds a glamorous sparkle to any space of your home. Terracotta Tiles also offers a collection of tiles made specifically for the swimming pool.

TERRACOTTA TILES IS AT 15 JALAN PENDIDIK U1/31, HICOM GLENMARIE INDUSTRIAL PARK, SHAH ALAM, TEL: +603-5569-4779.







TOP RIGHT
Glass mosaics that add panache to your space.

TOP FAR RIGHT
Terracotta Tiles showroom in Shah Alam.

RIGHT
Made-to-order tiles artwork.

BOTTOM
Blue and white tiles lend a rustic charm.



text WENSHAN PANG photography DANIEL LAI



PEOPLE

KNUD ERIK HANSEN

CEO AND THIRD-GENERATION OWNER OF DANISH COMPANY CARL HANSEN & SON



Knud Erik Hansen became the CEO of his century-old family company 12 years ago. He had spent a large part of his career working in other industries across the globe, before returning to take over the reins at the age of 52. Knud (say "kuh-nood") has big plans for the company and is already grooming the fourth generation – his children – to run the furniture manufacturing firm.

What led to Carl Hansen & Son becoming the world's largest manufacturer of furniture by Danish furniture designer Hans Wegner?
My father got to know Wegner when they were both in their 20s. What they had in common was carpentry. My dad was very focused on the business, wanting to make a name outside of Denmark. Wegner, on the other hand, was an architect who was interested only in the product, but needed an income. They had different ways of looking at things, but they needed each other. Naturally, they worked together and developed a very good friendship and partnership.

How difficult is it today to be faithful to Wegner's original designs?
They are complicated designs. There is no one straight piece; everything is rounded or bent in some way, with different tapering and angles. However, the pieces are exactly the same design as when he made them, and we cannot make it better. He knew so much about wood and the way it behaves. Like a pianist who plays without a score, he was a brilliant architect, knowing his product like the back of his hand.

What is the appeal of 1950s' Danish design?
It's the simplicity, quality, history and its environmental-friendliness which make it the perfect product. Nobody else does it better, as so much soul and effort goes into making timeless furniture that may not be in trend. The very first chairs we made 50 years ago are still around, and require only a touch-up to look new. It's sustainable furniture.

How do you see your products being integrated into modern homes?
I think it integrates beautifully, because the building style nowadays is very much "straight". There's a lot of concrete being used, as well as linear architectural features. Everything we produce is "round" and everything that is being built is "square", so if you put something soft into something rigid, it'll look very balanced.

What is your home like, in terms of furnishing and style?
It is a mix of old and new. I live in a house that was built in 1670, and I have chairs from my grandfather's time, my father's masterpieces and also other pieces that are hundreds of years old. There are a lot of antiques and new furniture, which look fantastic together. We entertain many guests – including architects – so it's a fun way of showing off the furniture, which isn't only from Carl Hansen & Son. ●

CARL HANSEN & SON IS AVAILABLE AT SPACE KL.

{ My grandfather, father and brother were carpenters, but I'm not – I don't see being different as a lack of quality or interest.





LEFT
Each weaver completes up to only eight Wishbone seats a day to ensure quality.

LEFT, BELOW
For each seat, 120 metres of paper cord is used. It takes about one hour for a skilled weaver to make one seat.

RIGHT
A special edition of the Wishbone chair was made this year with walnut and oak to commemorate what would have been Hans Wegner's 100th birthday.



text LOUISA CLARE LIM photos SPACE

Stay in touch with your home.



Legrand's home automation systems are a charming blend of nature & user-friendly technology — making them minimalist, yet sophisticated & classic. Thoughtfully crafted functions for easy control in timeless designs, they are the pinnacles of perfection.

Legrand's complete, integrated home automation systems come with unique designs, elevated with quality & versatility, to suit individual houses. They are the ideal control centre for your home.

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In the Pipeline

Don't dismiss copper pipes as fixtures that just reside within your walls. Playing on the raw, unpolished aesthetic of industrial design, these hardware pieces are being made into furnishings and statement decor with a cool utilitarian edge. ●



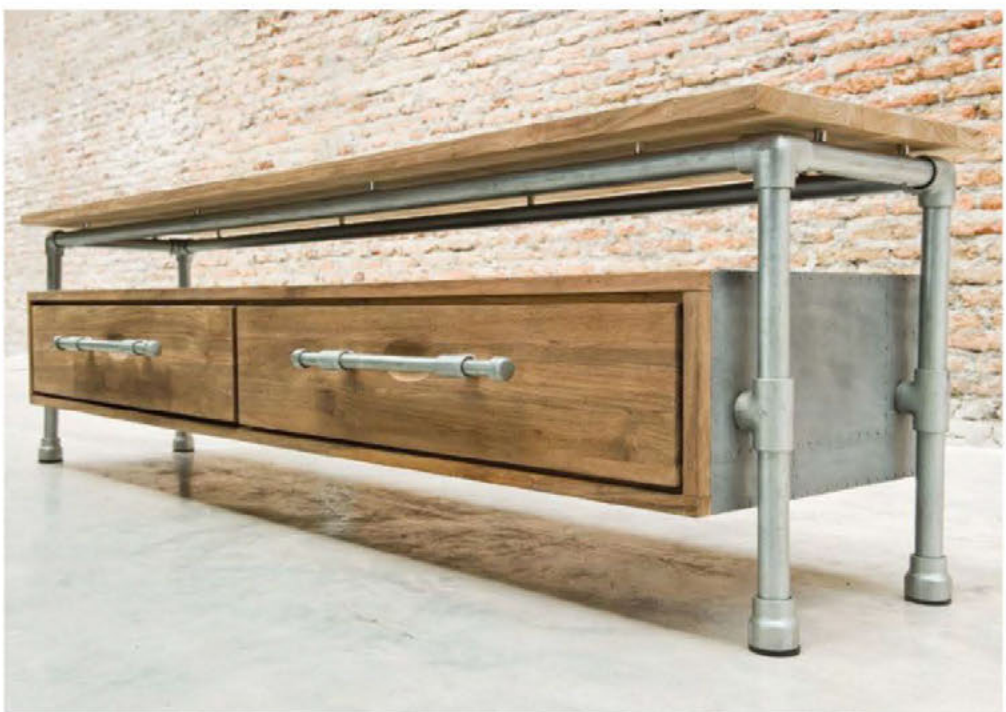
photo WWW.DEJIKI.COM

LEFT
Old and damaged pipes get an upgrade by being paired with custom-made tables and light fixtures at My Awesome Cafe.





{ Designers are raiding hardware stores for pipes to create industrial-style furnishings.

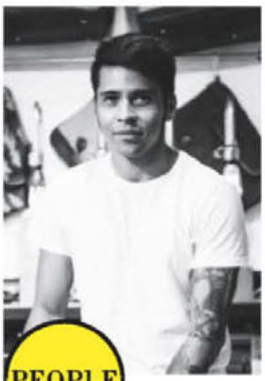


TOP
Create your own lamp from brass fittings and copper pipes by signing up with Make Your Own.

ABOVE
Crafted from metal pipes and topped with an exposed light bulb, this table lamp from Verde Light stands tall.

RIGHT
This console from D'Bodhi's Tube Line collection pairs galvanised pipes and reclaimed teak to make an eco-chic statement. Available at Journey East.

text BEATRICE BOWERS



PEOPLE

GUILLERMO JUAREZ

CARDBOARD SCULPTURE ARTIST

With 250 faceted surfaces made from nine 60cm by 90cm cardboard sheets, and taking around seven hours to cut and assemble by hand, the life-size cardboard sculpture of a howling wolf by Cazapapeles is quite a sight.

Cazapapeles (Spanish for "paper hunters") is a Mexican outfit formed by two 28-year-old designers, Guillermo Juarez and Fernando Martinez. Recently in town at the invitation of The Redundant Shop, the soft-spoken Guillermo explains their work process: "First, we sketch the design on paper. Then, we create a 3-D model of it on the computer, and then 'unwrap' the model to see how to physically put it together."

Known for its geometric animal sculptures, Cazapapeles' designs come from a combination of both guys' talents. "We met in college, and we were colleagues for a while," Guillermo recalls. "Then, (Fernando) started getting into origami and pinatas, and I picked up 3-D modelling while working at an architecture company."

As a fun side project, the duo combined forces to create mounted animal-head displays. When they realised that using fibreglass would be too costly, they challenged themselves to construct their ideas using micro-corrugated cardboard instead. Elevating the modest material into intricate sculptures got their designs some attention.

The pair were in the limelight late last year for creating a life-size scene inspired by *The Little Red Riding Hood* – which included wolves, crows, boulders and a girl in a red cape – and was made entirely out of cardboard. Currently, they're working on a 4m-tall sculpture of a human for a design event that's taking place in their hometown of Monterrey later this year. ●

PICK UP CAZAPAPELES' DESIGNS AT THE REDUNDANT SHOP, #01-22A BLOCK 5 EVERTON PARK, SINGAPORE, TEL: +65-6707-2005.

{ Cazapapeles' geometric sculptures are an elegant marriage of digital technology and handcrafted techniques.





ABOVE & LEFT
Cazapapeles' designs, such as the cardboard howling wolf sculpture, and ceramic skulls, are available at The Redundant Shop.

RIGHT
Guillermo cuts, folds, and assembles the laser-etched cardboard pieces to form geometric sculptures.

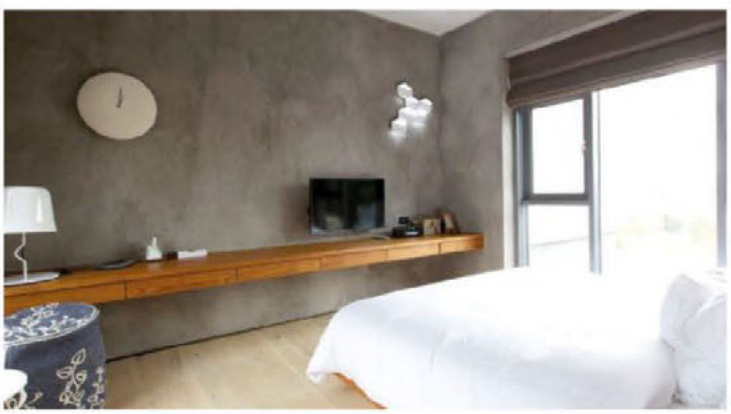


text MAVIS ANG photos THE REDUNDANT SHOP



ABOVE
Meant to be rented out as a whole unit with four rooms, the wood-based theme of the hotel cocoons guests in cosy warmth.

RIGHT
The contemporary designer furnishings in each room give the spaces a modern appeal.





LEFT
Travellers will be able to enjoy cooking facilities – treat this like your own super-chic kitchen!

CHECK OUT

URBAN POST HOTEL

PLAYING ON THE IDEA OF AN OUTPOST WHERE WEARY TRAVELLERS CAN GET SOME REST, THIS CONTEMPORARY-RUSTIC HOTEL IS A SURPRISING FIND IN FOSHAN, CHINA.

The idea behind it is a romantic one inspired by the spirit of exploration, yet the Urban Post Hotel looks anything but old-world.

Instead, the exclusive four-room hotel (or rather, villa) located along one of the most historical streets in Foshan has an ambience more akin to the well-appointed home of a design aficionado.

Shanghai-based firm A00 Architecture responded to the owner's brief for the hotel to have a "feeling of a designer home, but with full amenities and services for a business traveller", with a space that is not only contemporary and chic, but also warm and homely. This is thanks to its use of raw textures and natural materials, with a sprinkling of vintage furnishings. The architectural firm also designed the award-winning eco-chic URBN hotel in Shanghai.

The central concrete staircase is a dominant feature of the interiors which links its four floors. Each room was designed with a different appeal, but unified with an extensive use of natural materials, such as reclaimed American oak, polished terrazzo and old wood from Suzhou.

The natural hues are perfectly balanced by the sleek polish of designer furnishings, while a smattering of found items displayed around the interiors, such as wooden propeller blades, metal gears and even gardening tools, add character and a sense of history to the space.

SEE MORE OF A00 ARCHITECTURE'S WORK AT WWW.AZEROZERO.COM.
THE URBAN POST HOTEL IS AT 37 DONGHUA VILLA, LINGNAN TIANDI, FOSHAN, GUANGDONG, CHINA.

text REBECKKA WONG photos A00 ARCHITECTURE

The spacious freshness centre: Side-by-Side



- The Side-by-Side combination with five climate zones
- With BioFresh, food retains its healthy vitamins, fresh appearance and full flavour for up to three times longer than in an average refrigerator compartment
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Wood Works

Looking for a bed design with a difference, or simply don't have the budget for a bed frame after that expensive renovation? To complement his industrial-style home, homeowner Robert Chin fashioned a bed platform from raw wood pallets, and fixed casters to the base for easy movement. The end result is an industrial-chic statement piece that is simple enough to go with most contemporary looks.

text BEATRICE BOWERS photography WONG WEI LIANG art direction NONIE CHEN



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CHINA BLUES

Mix up your traditional blue and white tableware with a global fusion of patterns.



1 Unica by Target Studio light blue on white tile, from Design Hub. **2** Green and white porcelain teapot, from The Godown. **3** N & I Asia plate (12.5cm by 2.5cm), (16.5cm by 3.5cm), (22.5cm by 2.5cm), from Robinsons. **4** Oxley blue placemat, from Crate and Barrel. **5** Loveramics willow salad plate (21cm), from Robinsons. **6** Tropic palm napkin ring, from Crate and Barrel. **7** Porcelain white and blue fishnet teacup, from The Godown. **8** Porcelain white and blue lily teacup, from The Godown. **9** Porcelain white and blue fishnet small round caddy, from The Godown.

Blue, blue, I love you

Serve up shades of blue to personalise your interpretation of this classic colour scheme.



1 Unica by Target Studio green on white tile, from Design Hub. **2** Toulouse platter (16.5 inch by 10 inch), from Crate and Barrel.
3 Supermama days of lighting set, from Robinsons. **4** Salud Azul short glass, from Crate and Barrel.
5 Salud Azul tall glass, from Crate and Barrel. **6** Raza zigzag platter, from Crate and Barrel.
7 Shibori napkin, from Crate and Barrel. **8** Porcelain demi spoon and fork, from Crate and Barrel.

PEOPLE

I love design and I love my work, so I do my very best, and have been blessed with good success.



Although Oki Sato says he has never thought of himself as the poster boy of Japanese contemporary design, he has become quite an icon of the scene. The 37-year-old founder of Tokyo design house Nendo is known globally for his simple yet sentimental designs, so it does not come as a surprise that he will be curating the Hidden – Unveiling Japanese Design exhibition held in Singapore this month. We speak to him to find out more.

What led you to become the curator of this exhibition?
The Japan External Trade Organization (Jetro) carried out an open tender to various design agencies to curate an exhibition that would best represent Japanese design. We proposed a concept of showcasing the hidden sides of products to unveil the essence of Japanese design, and it struck a chord with the organisation. It wanted to reach out to the international market through this exhibition, and I came in to add the X factor to the show.

Tell us more about the objects you've chosen for the show.
We want to reveal the hidden aspects of design – the "behind", "inside" and "before" stages – which are usually not noticed. We want this exhibition to appeal to everyone, even those who are not interested in design. So, we acquired more common, everyday items that everyone can relate to. However, each item is unique in its own way.

What qualities do you feel are important to product design?
Product design should speak directly to the user, and relate to his emotions with the story behind the product. There is usually something to share about the "hidden" aspects of a product, which you can't deduce from its superficial surface.

text LOUISA CLARE LIM photography VERNON WONG art direction KAFFY TAN

BRIGHT BAZAAR

Have a vibrant Christmas this year with the IKEA Christmas collections.



STRÅLA pendant lamp, star, RM39.90; STRÅLA LED lanterns, snowflake, RM24.90; VINTERFINT table-runner, RM12.90 each.



VINTER 2014 slippers, RM39.90/pair.

The IKEA Christmas collection is teeming with fun, warm and useful pieces that are aimed to bring family members together. Besides decorative items, there is a wide array of products for the home such as bedlinen, glasses, plates, pastry cutters and aprons that will last well into the subsequent seasons. Inspired by the traditional red, green and white colours that signify Christmas, this collection is designed to boost the festive spirit in the home.

A second collection, call the Winter Holiday collection, is characterised by geometric shapes in alluring shades of white, silver and gold. The collection, which consists of table cloths, candles and ornaments, aims to brighten up your Christmas celebrations.



STRÅLA LED lantern, RM17.90.

To view more of the IKEA Christmas collections, visit the IKEA store or IKEA.my today.

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HAVE A HEALTHY, MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Make some healthy, delicious dishes to serve up with the Panasonic's 32L Econavi Steam Combination Oven. We love this festive chocolate lava cake.

Chocolate Lava Cake
4 Servings

Dark chocolate	70g
Unsalted butter	70g
Cocoa powder	10g
Caster sugar	50g
Flour	35g
Eggs	2





1 Place the dark chocolate and unsalted butter together in a bowl and melt it over a saucepan of simmering water. In another bowl, mix the cocoa powder, caster sugar and flour together.



2 Gradually whisk in the cocoa powder mixture to the chocolate mixture. Add in the eggs and mix thoroughly.



3 Lightly grease and flour an aluminium cup. Pour in the chocolate fondant mixture and chill in the refrigerator for at least half an hour.

Tip
Instead of an aluminium cup, you may also use a ramekin or a small round dish (lightly greased with cooking spray) to bake your Chocolate Lava Cake.



4 Preheat the oven by pressing OVEN, set temperature to 190°C, and then press START. Bake the chocolate fondant for 7 minutes in the preheated microwave oven. Once the fondant is done, carefully remove from the aluminium cup and decorate with fresh raspberries and a dusting of icing sugar.



Panasonic New ECONAVI Steam Combination Oven is equipped with new 100% pure turbo steam function. Its powerful, high density steam enables speedy professional steaming and retains the flavour and nutrition of food at the same time. Steaming can also be combined with baking and it will make the food healthier and have more moisture.

A feature you will love is the Crispy Grill, which comes with top and bottom grill for that crispiness and deliciously browned food like chicken wings and pizza. As it cooks, excess fat is drained off by the grooves in the grill tray.

The oven is supported by new technology, namely the Econavi and Inverter Technology. When the Econavi is on, both heater and microwaves can be concentrated on only the front area of the grill tray for more efficient cooking, saving you 10% or more energy and cooking time.

It uses a unique Flat and Wide design which results in an increase of cooking space by 45% when compared to the conventional turntable model.



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Scan to experience Dato' Chef Fazley's gourmet cooking

'TIS THE SEASON

As the holiday season draws close, you are probably preparing for gatherings and parties with family and friends. What better way to keep food fresh than with the Panasonic NR-F510GT Fridge.

Sleek Design

The glass door of this fridge lifts it up to a whole new design level. Those looking to decorate their kitchen now have a functional and stylish choice as the glass door serves as part of the kitchen decor, giving the illusion of more space. This design will be the perfect fit in modern and contemporary kitchens. With this premium multi-door storage feature, you can now put food in the right compartments for optimum freshness. The convenient layout also makes it quick and easy to remove and put in items.



Fresh Food Always

The -3°C Prime Fresh Compartment freezes food to -3°C , a very light freeze. This ensures food is never hardened and raw foods stay at their most nutrient dense stage, giving you longer lasting flavour and freshness. You are able to cook without defrosting, and there is minimal spreading of food odors.



Amazing Technology

With the Econavi and Inverter technology, you no longer have to worry about wasting unnecessary energy. These technologies make your fridge perform at optimum level, and controls temperature, timing, power use and more.

The new Storage Sensor detects the amount of food stored in the refrigerator and adjusts cooling power, giving you more savings and less energy wastage.

Made in JAPAN



NR-F510GT
Onyx Mirror

Everyday Heroes

Equipped with Panasonic's signature Econavi and Inverter technologies, these energy saving and hard workers will be a welcome addition to any kitchen.

The BL series comes with a jumbo freezer, making it easier for you to keep your favourite foods fresh longer.

The BR series has been designed for ease of use every day. It is a bottom freezer fridge, which puts food and beverages consumed most often within easy reach.



NR-BR347Z (308L)
NR-BR307Z (265L)



NR-BL347N/P/V (303L)
NR-BL307P/V (267L)
NR-BL267V (234L)

12 YEAR WARRANTY COMPRESSOR



From 15th December 2014 to 15 February 2015, stand a chance to get these exclusive sets with purchase of selected Panasonic fridges. For more details, please visit www.panasonictogetherness.com.



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- NR-BL307
- NR-BL267



NEW

2-Door Bottom Freezer
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- NR-BR307



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CHECK OUT

BLACK GOLD

AMY CHOO OF MOOI STUDIO MIXES BOLD COLOURS AND TEXTURES AT THE ECLIPSE BOUTIQUE, CREATING A GLAMOROUS MECCA FOR THE FASHION AFICIONADOS.

Interior Designer Amy Choo knew what Sonny San, designer of fashion brand Eclipse wanted when she was asked to lead the revamp of the boutique in Pavilion KL.

"The Eclipse brand has always had a strong identity," says Amy. "So we did not deviate from its DNA." Dark colours like black and midnight blue take over the boutique, punctuated by gold, silver and bronze accents.

When it comes to the materials, she enlisted the assistance of Goodrich, who provided fabrics for curtains, sofas and stools, wallcoverings and floor vinyls. Choo's favourite material is the travertine vinyls she used on parts of the walls and floor. "Their colour is reminiscent of gold," she says. "They resemble genuine travertine very closely but without the price tag of the real stone."

Having designed several Eclipse boutiques such as the one in Suria KLCC and Mid Valley Megamall, Choo has aligned her vision with that of Sonny. Both are risk-takers and are not afraid to experiment with colours and materials.

In the boutique, you'll see a wonderful mix of texture that is brought about by the ingenious blend of fabrics, wallcoverings and floor vinyls. "I always go back to Goodrich when I source for materials," she shares. "It offers a wide range of materials that are classy and elegant."

Prior to starting her own company Mooi Studio, Amy has worked with acclaimed studio Swot and has honed her architectural skills by working with a local architectural firm. "I studied interior architecture so I have a strong predilection for the structural," she says. And the evidence is clear at the Eclipse boutique in Pavilion KL.



MOOI STUDIO IS AT 1-3 JALAN SOLARIS 2, SOLARIS MONT KIARA, KUALA LUMPUR, TEL: +603-6209-9828.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT
Fabrics, floor vinyls and wallcoverings are from Goodrich.

Amy fabricated a "curtain" from Eclipse accessories.

With neutral colours interlaced with dark accents, the Eclipe store exudes glamour.

{ Dark colours like black and midnight blue take over the boutique, punctuated by gold, silver and bronze accents.





text WENSHAN PANG photography ROBIN YONG

Curvaceous Candle

Is your table slanting or is it a trick from the candlestick's curvaceous design? Standing at 10-inches tall, this whimsical candlestick in brass looks as if it came from a crossover between Alice in Wonderland and Beauty and the Beast. Made from a combination of marble and resin plastic, the curves of the Distortion Brass Candlestick are rendered using a 3D program and it has a smooth textural coating.

AVAILABLE FROM WWW.CORPICK.COM



Adjustable Bed

The Oxford adjustable bed from Getha is no ordinary bed. Resting on individual duomats and controlled by respective remote controls, the bed uses German technology which allows you to adjust head and foot ends either simultaneously or separately. The bed is available in either super single or king sizes. The latter comes in two separate single-sized pure latex mattresses.

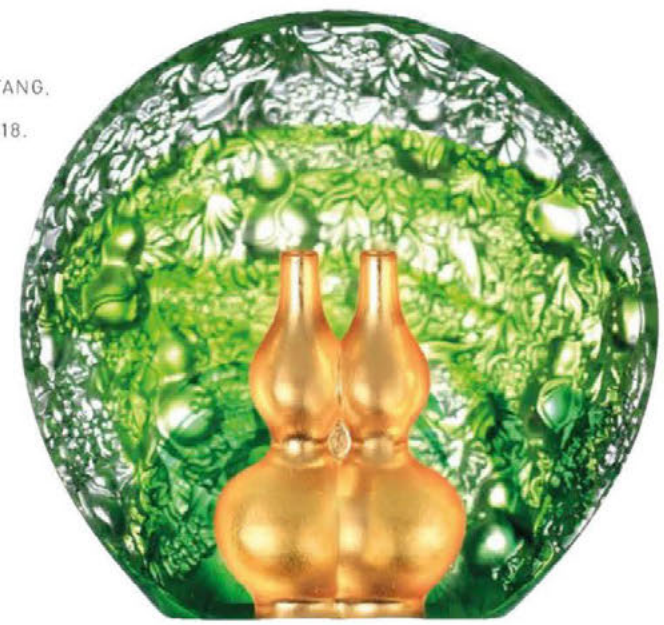
HAVE A LOOK AND FEEL OF THE OXFORD ADJUSTABLE BED AT GETHA SLEEP CENTRE, LOT 3, NO.62, JALAN UNIVERSITI, PETALING JAYA, SELANGOR, TEL: +603-7958-4776.



Harmonious Union

The wonder of being in harmony with nature is depicted through the contemporary design of home decoration piece entitled A Resplendent Union from Liuligongfang's The Beauty of Harmony collection. This beautiful translucent piece consists of two small hulu symbols representing fulfilment, fortune and joy, which are seen to be encapsulated within a large natural world.

AVAILABLE AT LOT 3.34.00 LEVEL 3, PAVILION, 168, JALAN BUKIT BINTANG, KUALA LUMPUR, TEL: +603-2148-9618.





Kare opens at 1Utama Shopping Centre!

An impressive range of individualistic furnishings occupies the 11, 000 sq-ft store at 1Utama Shopping Centre! Kare features more than 10 trend showcases including Cigar Lounge, Rodeo, Rock Star, Factory, Blue Dessert and many more in its latest outlet. The shop also houses the very first Kare Café in South East Asia, allowing patrons to indulge in light meals, cakes, pastries and coffee.

KARE IS LOCATED AT G117-G119, GROUND FLOOR,
1 UTAMA SHOPPING CENTRE, PETALING JAYA, SELANGOR,
TEL: +603-7732 5879.

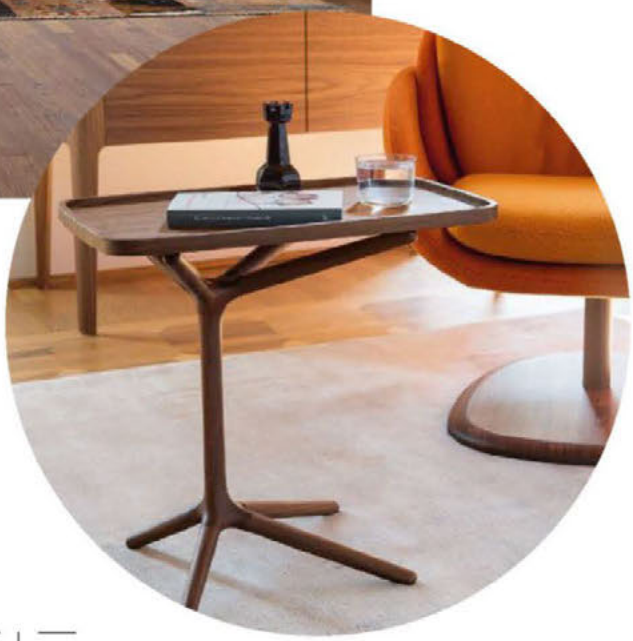


Table Tray

Porada introduced its latest product, designed by the winner of the Porada International Design Award 2013. The competition was designed to give young designers the opportunity to showcase their talents and share their ideas with professionals. Tables were the theme given last year and Mattia Fossati won the competition with his unique ICS Convertible Side Table. It is made from Canaletta walnut frame and can be rotated to change its height. The unique design allows the top to become a tray when separated from the base.

PORADA PRODUCTS ARE AVAILABLE
FROM STUDIO 216.

Spicy Fragrance

Noel is a fruity mix with spice, a blend of refreshing balsams, persimmon and citrus fused with spicy star anise, clove and nutmeg.



AVAILABLE AT CRABTREE & EVELYN
RETAIL STORES.

OUR PICKS | Mirrors

1) Starlight mirror, from Barbara Barry.

2) Honefoss mirror, from Ikea.

3) Mix mirrors, from Studio 216.







Water Resistant

Soil's bath mat absorbs water from the bottom of your feet and dries over time. Made from diatomaceous earth, it has both moisture retention and odour control properties. It is advisable to keep the bath mat placed outside the bathroom and use it with Soil's logo facing down. The bath mat is available in two different sizes.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT
WWW.THEJEKYLLANDHYDEPROJECT.COM





Classic headphones

Hand-assembled in France, Aedle's VK-1 headphones in Classic edition combines the minimalistic and refined design with high-definition custom made titanium transducers. The headphones come with a one-year warranty, a travel pouch, airline adapter, a 3.5mm to 1.2m cable with microphone and remote control, and Aramid fibre coated cable of 3.5mm to 1.2m or 2.4m in a box. The headphone is also available in Carbon or Legacy editions.

AVAILABLE AT JABEN OUTLETS.

Space Saving Table

Ideal to be used indoors and outdoors, the Delta table by Jorge Pensi Design Studio from Vondom, has weather resistant properties. Injected with an aluminium base, the table is a perfect outdoor table which requires only the folding of the top to keep it away after use. The space saving feature enables one to line it up against the other. The table is available in different finishes to the aluminium parts and tabletops.

AVAILABLE FROM QUEL FURNITURE, 35, JALAN PJU 5/21, THE STRAND, KOTA DAMANSARA, PETALING JAYA, TEL: +603-6142-4223.



Sweet Lea

Stadler Form from Switzerland created Lea, an aroma diffuser. Launched in IFA trade fair in Berlin, Lea functions by releasing fragrant aroma from the fragrance oil bottle in a subtle and discreet way. Its interval mode allows it to run for a long time, with Lea operating for 10 minutes at a time with a 20-minute break in between. With its daylight mode, it only functions in response to brightness, making it very economical. Lea is designed by Stadler Form in collaboration with Swiss designers, Fabian Bernhard and Thomas Burkard.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT WWW.STADLERFORM.COM





Wrinkle-Free Steamer

Is there a convenient way to remove wrinkles from various types of fabrics? Tefal's Press and Steam IS6300 garment steamer provides fast and efficient steaming, using its exclusive patented Roll and Press system. It has a sturdy vertical support and a flat surface for users to press garments against and holds them in place, while steaming. The garment steamer comes with a removable 2.4 litres (80oz) water tank for easy refilling.

AVAILABLE AT MAIN DEPARTMENTAL STORES AND ELECTRICAL SPECIALISTS.



Daikin launches New Urusara 7 Air Conditioner

Equipped with Streamer Technology, Daikin's new high-end air conditioner has Photocatalyic Air-Purifying and Deodorising Filter that purifies the air by discharging, irradiate and decompose mould as well as pollen. It removes viruses, allergic and harmful chemical substances from the room. Urusara 7 automatically brushes dust off the pre-filter and collects them in an installed dust box. With the Double Air Intake technology, it cools the room by drawing double the amount of hot air into the air-conditioner.

AVAILABLE AT AUTHORISED SALES CENTRES AND ELECTRICAL SHOPS.



Clear Vision

Toshiba Pro Theatre L9450 Series is the second generation Ultra HD 4K TV with Android features which offers excellent picture quality on a big screen. It is equipped with third generation CEVO 4K Engine, which offers speed with 10-bit video processing that ensures an excellent gaming experience. Visuals are now crisp and clear with 3840 x 2160 pixels picture quality and online dramas can be viewed on the big screen. The TV is available in 50, 65 or 84 inch.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT WWW.TOSHIBA.COM.MY



Bed Cleaner

LG's CordZero Bedding, cordless bedding cleaner reduces the amount of dust mites and harmful allergens. It has a powerful suction and three distinct levels of cleaning. It uses a built-in UV sterilisation station which ensures hygienic bedding and reduces the chance of secondary contamination. The Dual HEPA filter includes a multi-filtration system that works to remove dust, odour and germs.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT WWW.LG.COM/MY



Stylish Speakers

Logitech's Z443 fills your room with big, bold and dynamic sound using three-inch satellite drivers and a 5.25-inch subwoofer driver. They come in a stylish dark wood body which fits right into your contemporary interior. Furthermore, with the help of the satellites, the Z443 speakers produce high crisp notes. With its wooden enclosures made from medium density fibreboard, the Z443 help deliver deeper, warmer sound and a consistent acoustic experience.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT WWW.LOGITECH.COM



POWER CLEANING

IN MOST HOMES, KEEPING THE FLOOR CLEAN IS A CHALLENGE, WHETHER IT IS MARBLE, TERRAZZO, PARQUET OR MARBLE.

The SuperMocio mop does the job efficiently. It has a blue power zone on the mop head, made out of 42mm thick strips of 100 percent microfiber. It has the ability to trap dirt and small particles like hair from the floor. This is followed by the easy removal of tough and stubborn dirt by the strips of microfiber, which has the best absorbing rate among all materials. It is reusable with an easy-to-replace, click-in refill feature.

Many homemakers find mopping the floor time consuming and back-breaking, especially the constant bending to wring the mop. To complement the unique SuperMocio mop, SuperMocio Power Press makes mopping an effortless chore. This bucket is fitted with a patented bionic wringing system that squeezes the mop from all sides, effectively reducing 40 percent elbow grease. There is little to no water dripping on the floor, which results in a less slippery surface as the floor dries at a faster rate of 25 percent.

It has a funnel for controlled water release and a side clip inside the bucket, to hold the mop in place. You no longer have to worry about the mop dropping. Made from durable plastic, both wringer and bucket are stable and long-lasting.

SuperMocio mop and SuperMocio Power Press are available from selected hypermarkets and supermarkets.



EASY DOES IT

Spend a little more time with your family and less time cleaning your house. Innovative, convenient and unique in their designs, home cleaning products from Vileda are now available in Malaysia!

Using advanced technology, the products from the renowned German premium homecare brand, caters to your every household needs, resulting in a cleaner and safer living environment.

The super convenient, 1.2 Spray Flat Mop has cleaning fluid inside the handle and only requires you to spray on any surface and wipe dry without the need to bend down.

Highly recommended by DuPont, the Vileda Active Scrub Scourer is a kitchen solution to get rid of grease, dirt and bacteria. The scourer does not scratch delicate surfaces such as Teflon and other non-stick cookware because it removes stains gently, yet effectively.

When cleaning the bathroom, the mop head and telescopic handle of the Bath Magic System enables you to clean every nook and cranny of tiled covered areas. Furthermore, the Vileda Bathroom Sponge cloth protects your fingers while removing soap residues and lime scales without scratching surfaces.

The Vileda Dust Cloth is specifically created for dusting objects such as beddings, curtains and carpets. It has 40 percent better pick up.

Other products in its range include the SuperMocio Double Action, a mop with integrated Microfiber cleaning zone, DuActiva, a broom with an integrated foam layer to avoid dust raising, the EasyWring UltraMat which comes with a bucket, a wringer and cleans a wider area of the floor and more.

Do expect more household products to be developed as millions of innovative efficient household products are being developed in R&D centres.

Vileda, was a creation of Freudenberg, a major German company with its origins dating back to 1848. Today, Vileda itself has 20 factories operating throughout the world.



FROM TOP LEFT
Vileda Microfibre Universal Cloth.

BOTTOM LEFT
Vileda Dust Cloth.

RIGHT
Vileda Active Scrub Scourer.



The Vileda Active Scrub Scourer is suitable to be used on non-stick cookware.



The Bath Magic System enables you to clean every nook and cranny.



Easy to use, the 1.2 Spray Flat Mop has cleaning fluid inside the handle.

For more information, www.vileda.com.my



ART

D.U.R.A

MALAYSIAN-BORN ILLUSTRATOR AND ABSTRACT ARTIST QUITS HER JOB AS A FASHION GRAPHIC DESIGNER TO BECOME A FULL-TIME ARTIST.

How and when did you develop your passion as an artist? Is there any significant event that influenced your decision? My passion was always arts and textiles but I did not get a chance to pursue them. I started working as a Corporate Wear designer for a year before landing a job as a Fashion Graphic Designer in year 2005. It was only when I developed sleeping problems that I started painting and drawing again.

How and why do you use the Sgraffito technique on your artwork? Sgraffito means "to scratch" in Italian. It is a painting technique where the artist scratches the top layer of the paint to reveal areas of the surface underneath. It requires the use of palette knives or scraper tools just to scrap off two to three overlapping layers of paint. Using this technique, I am able to create a dynamic piece rich in movement, texture and colours.

What are the difficulties and challenges you face as an artist? The biggest challenge I faced was to get my work out there and find the right niche. In art, it is not just about making a great piece, but it is also about marketing it to your potential buyers. It wasn't easy in the beginning, but I managed to make my way into the industry by participating in various group exhibitions and art forums.

Are there any upcoming projects and exhibitions you are involved in? I am designing new patterns for limited edition scarfs in Malaysia. I was involved in a group exhibition by Mekar Collective. I was one of the five artists to depict the wild side of nature in the exhibition entitled, Untamed Bloom.

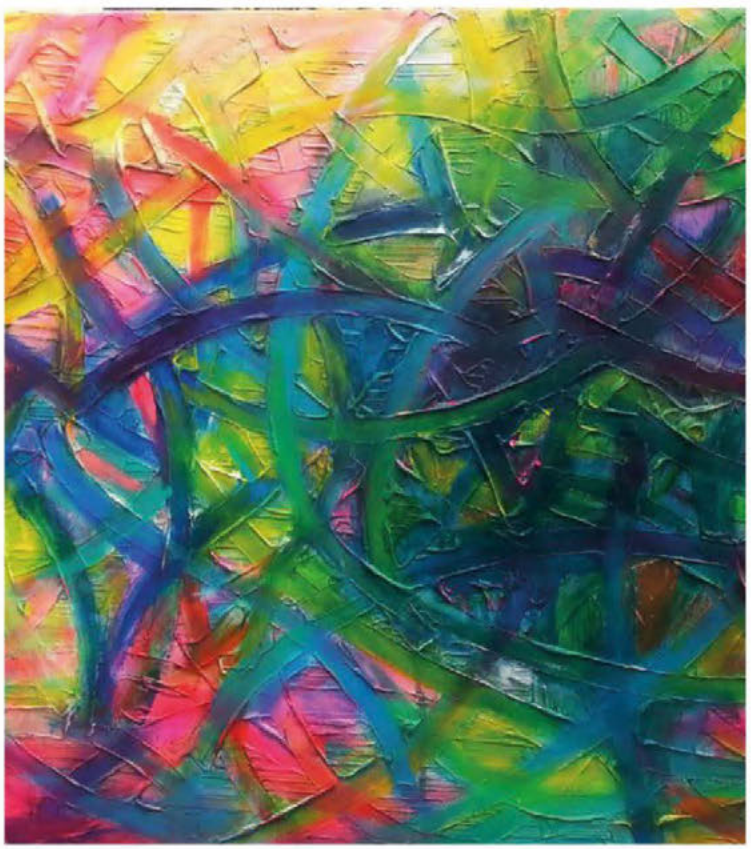
What is your real name? My real name is Duraton Hannani Amir. As an artist, I go by the name D.U.R.A.

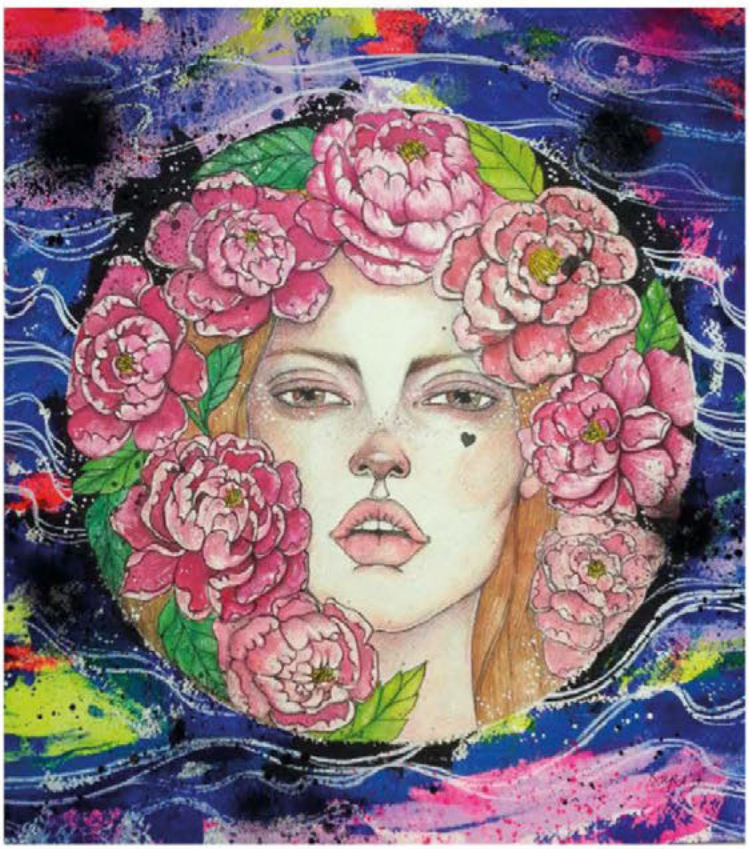


ABOVE
Dura scarf

BOTTOM LEFT
Freedom to Dance

BOTTOM RIGHT
Delicate Beauty illustration





text NG YI XIANG photos D.U.R.A

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NOTE

FROM THE EDITOR AND DATO VINCENT LIM



THE EDITOR

Designer Showcase 2014 sees new designers and architects in the spotlight. We are proud to present to you their work and hope that they inspire you to think about the space that you're in. Again, we are working with Homedec and thank them for their invaluable collaboration and input.

This year sees another innovation from them, namely The Rooms showcase during the Homedec just past. Four renowned designers are chosen to design four great spaces to different themes. We are sure fair visitors went away with new insights and ideas.

Over to Dato Vincent.

ELAINE DONG
EDITOR





DATO VINCENT LIM

This year, Homedec yet again seeks to break the boundaries of design with The Rooms showcase during the two-weekend exhibition. We speak to Dato Vincent Lim, the brains behind C.I.S. Network Sdn Bhd, the organiser of Homedec.

What was the selection criteria when you chose these four participants in Rooms this year?
PDI Design & Associates was the winner of the MIID-REKA HOMEDEC Residential 2013 Award. The MIID-REKA was organised by Malaysian Institute of Interior Designers.

Bill Keith was selected because of the combination of a Fashion Designer and a Home Fashion Creator himself. The others, Sky Creation Design and Sunpizz were exhibitors who are keen to introduce their new themes/concepts.

Rooms is yet another innovative initiative from Homedec. Was it well received?
The Rooms has gained another positive feedback with over 93% of respondents bringinspired by the design concepts. About 88% of them were influenced to buy the featured products by exhibitors on display in The Rooms.

After three successful conceptions brought to life, what will Homedec do next? How do you continue to stay on top of the game?
The Design Street concept will be a permanent feature to introduce new designs, products, material and theme for homeowners to stay updated of the latest. The introduction of designers and personalities of the industry will be one of the main features here as well.

The last time we spoke to you, you wanted to build a platform to join the people behind the industry with the public. What progress has been made? Are the public now more aware of their options?

It is still a continuous process to surface these talented personalities through such special feature.

We will continue to support MIID and to promote the interior design profession such as through the MIID-REKA HOMEDEC Residential Award to let homeowners be aware of award-winning interior designers and the profession as a whole. To further spread the awareness, the Award winner is given the opportunity to conduct a solo exhibition in HOMEDEC in Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Johor Bahru, Sabah and Sarawak.

A Life Individual



David Abela & Rebecca Amos, Founders & Directors of 3 Degrees Marketing

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HOME IMPROVEMENT

At the recent Homedec, four designers put their stylish imprints on four rooms that are bound to inspire you.

After the success of the Urban Cube project last year, where four prominent interior designers were invited to put their signature imprints onto four individual 3.5mx3.5m "cubes", Homedec brought back a similar initiative called The Rooms this year. Four interior designers were commissioned to design four life-sized rooms based on pre-determined themes.

"We have come up with The Rooms to give [Homedec] visitors the latest and edgiest in interior design. In the past, interior design was only available to a select few but we want to change that," said Dato' Vincent Lim, President of CIS Network, the organiser of Homedec. "By making high quality interior design more accessible, this can shake up the industry and give designer their due recognition. Often, they are very much unknown to the public."

The interior designers are Ooi Boon Seong, Bill Keith, Eddie Ng and Astley Ng and their respective themes are Industrial Chic, Tropical Indochine, Modern Classic and Boho Chic. The main sponsors of The Rooms are Megaman Electronic & Lighting, Panasonic, Fascina, KC Landscape Service, TAK Products and Services and Continental Aces.

TOP
Astley Ng, Ooi Boon Seong, Dato' Vincent Lim, Bill Keith and Eddie Ng.


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"By making high quality interior design more accessible, this can shake up the industry and give designer their due recognition. Often, they are very much unknown to the public."









INDUSTRIAL CHIC

Ooi Boon Seong is from award-winning PDI Design & Associates. His room Industrial Chic features exposed bricks and beton brut walls overlaid with metal accents. Upcycled items also found their way into the mix. The look is youthful, stylish and edgy. "The Industrial Chic look also suitable to be used in a dance studio or an office," says Ooi.

TROPICAL INDOCHINE

Bill Keith is known for his beautiful dresses. And recently he began trying his hand at designing homes. His room Tropical Indochine exudes the restful atmosphere akin to that of a luxury breach resort through the generous use of wooden elements and decorative items inspired by Asean cultures. His design aims to provide a bolt hole for the busy urban dweller.

MODERN CLASSIC

Designed by Eddie Ng of Sunpizz Kitchen and Home, the Modern Classic room sees a blend of neutral colours like white, black and grey that gives the space a contemporary appeal. Sheer curtains and chandeliers help the room score some extra style points. As its name suggests, the Modern Classic look is timeless and will stay relevant for years to come.

BOHO CHIC

The Bohemian style has long been loved for being effortless, whimsical and eclectic. This is personified in the design of Astley Ng of Sky Creation Design. Wooden and metal elements take dominance in the Boho Chic room, which is interlaced with accessories in bold patterns and bright colours. The space emanates a rustic, down-to-earth quality.

FOR MORE INFO OF UPCOMING HOMEDEC EVENT, VISIT WWW.HOMEDEC.COM.MY.

photos HOMEDEC



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BELOW
A cosy area that allows homeowners to seat back and relax.





SKY CREATION DESIGN SDN BHD

A product must first serve its function before it is enhanced with aesthetics. This is in keeping with the notion form follows function.

REGIONAL DESIGN PRINCIPAL
Astley Ng

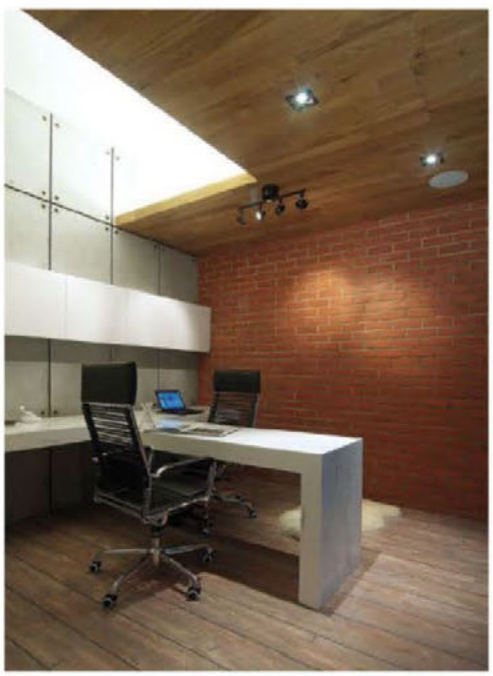
"The couple wanted a contemporary home with a touch of industrialism," Astley says. He was inspired to express it in a bold, edgy statement. This design came to fruition primarily because the clients were receptive to ideas, which gave him freedom to use his skills and creativity to manifest his visions and they had budgeted sufficiently for it.

"The budget will help keep everyone grounded. We can always propose but if it gets too expensive, then every design effort will go to waste. So my visions are always pragmatic. Do not design a castle if they can only afford a cottage," he says.

This collaboration of the brief, vision and budget usually requires four basic parties. The client comes out with the brief, the designers for their innovative creations, the contractors who transform symbols on paper into reality and projects supervisors who ascertain the completion of all works within a stipulated timeline.

The interior project is carried out at Hillcrest Villa in Singapore, which belong to banking and investment professionals. He added textures and grungy elements into the 287 square metres cluster terrace unit. Subdued and neutral colours are seen throughout the home.





Great contrasts between elements are seen in the study. A brick wall opposes a smooth white one underneath and the wall in between is grey, giving an industrial look. In terms of material, the floor is wooden and part of the ceiling is mounted with oak strips. This is paired up with a marble T-shaped table. The structure functions like a cubicle but with a more open-concept; each person gets his own side to work on.

Brown chairs and a wooden table with sleek metal frames grace the dining area which looks out into the greenery of the garden through a glass panel. The area sits opposite the kitchen, which is enclosed in glass.

The sitting room offers something unique as requested by the client. "They wanted to position the TV console in a non-conventional way. Typically we would place the TV console and feature wall as an eye catching and symmetrical design. Here we mount it on a column that actually hides the players and a wine fridge on the other side that is facing the dining area. Another interesting feature was the use of solid oak strips mounted on the ceiling as opposed to the conventional false ceiling." Clean and spacious, the sitting room contains a wooden table and four cabinets with sliding doors, which are converted into bookshelves. The designer adds texture to the room with cushions of various fabrics.

The homeowners are greeted by the relaxing hues of grey, black and white in ▸

TOP
A TV console is mounted onto a column.

LEFT
The study area includes a brick wall.

EST. 1982

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NEW COLLECTIONS 2014

DESIGNERS GUILD











the master bedroom. The bed is raised on a platform and is accompanied by a huge cushioned headboard. Contemporary designs of curvaceous decorations are seen on top of glossy side tables, which reflects modernity. Meanwhile, windows are covered with heavy and light fabrics which allow them to control the sunlight in the room. At the foot of the bed, a glass bathroom framed by tiles is strategically placed behind a TV. The only old-fashioned element in the room is the louvered door which gives access to the bathroom.

The contemporary industrial style is achieved by a team of designers who are highly driven, motivated, dedicated and are driven by their passion. Sky Creation has a unique selling point of "we go green" and has been certified as eco-friendly with sustainable interior design. Moreover, it has so far enjoyed accolades, media recognition and government accreditations. "Regional expansion plans are underway and we hope to go as far as to set up shop down under."

Astley was trained in fine arts. He enjoys injecting creativity and putting a vibrant spin to a product. At the same time, he strongly believes in listening to what design a client wants and the budget they are comfortable with. "Sort this out to get a clear picture and then provide the right inputs and advice to ensure it gets completed on time," he says. "Renovation is the rebirth of a space after it has gone through a well thought out design process."

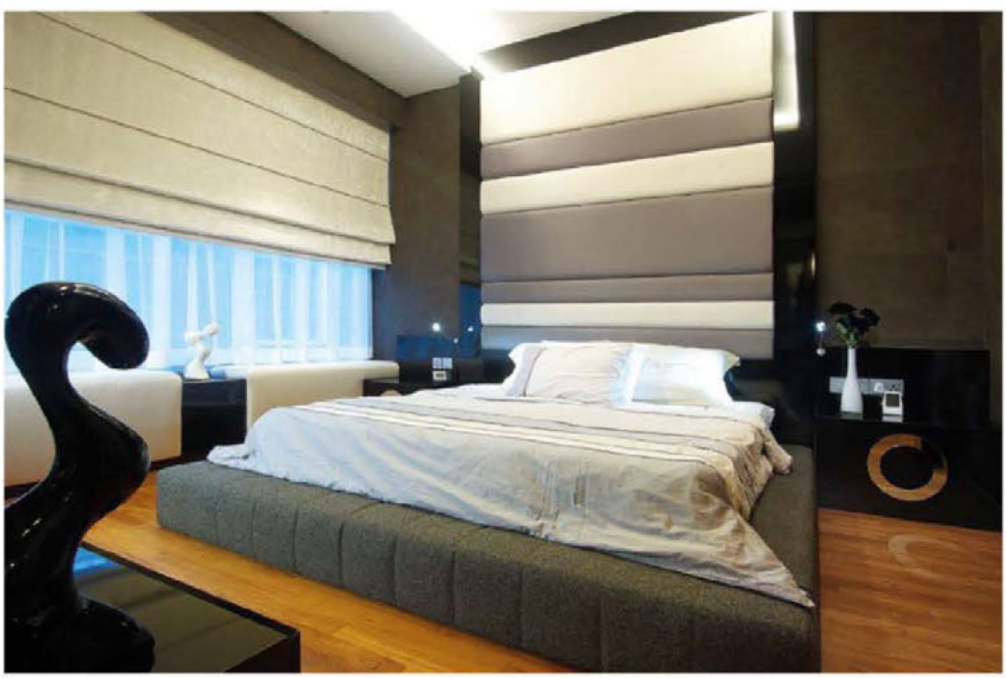
SKY CREATION DESIGN SDN BHD
SINGAPORE HQ OFFICE
NO 8, KIM KEAT LANE, 328865, SINGAPORE
TEL: +65-6352-8809

UNIT D-G-08, BLOCK D, RITZE PERDANA
JALAN PJU8/2, DAMANSARA PERDANA
47820 PETALING JAYA.
TEL: +603-7725-8809
WWW.SKYCREATIONDC.COM

"Renovation is the rebirth of a space after it has gone through a well thought out design process."

TOP LEFT
Room decorations give a touch of modernity.

BOTTOM RIGHT
The master bedroom is in subdued hues of black, grey and white.





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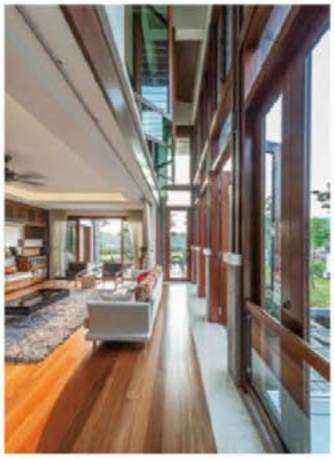
ESSENTIAL DESIGN INTEGRATED

Functionality, connectivity and timelessness are the three main things we always look at. Understanding the needs and lifestyle of our clients allows for a "made to measure" space.

DIRECTOR
Wong Pei San

ARCHITECT
Chan Mun Inn

INTERIOR DESIGNER
Leong Sieu Mei



A deluge of sunlight rushes in through large windows.

OPPOSITE PAGE
The front of the house has been turned to its side.

Essential Design Integrated (EDI) likes to switch things up. Recently, when the designers were commissioned to redesign a 30-year-old property in the Damansara area in Petaling Jaya, they gave the semi-detached house a new lease of life by turning its front to the side, one that faces a spacious empty land.

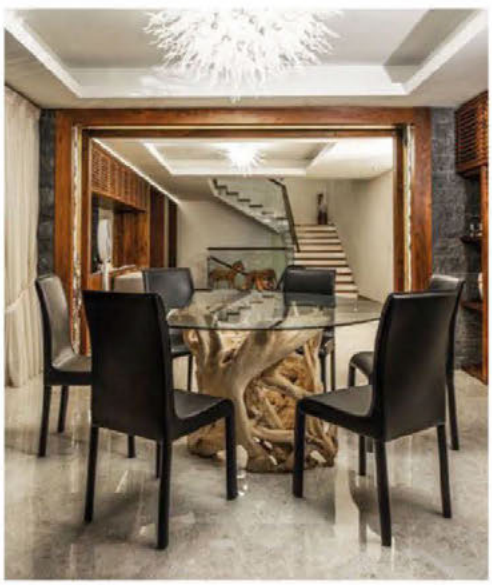
Chan Mun Inn, architect of EDI reveals that the homeowner wanted to transform the squalid house into a new, modern home for his family but with minimal change to the building's original structure. He also wanted a design that would take advantage of the existing garden area. Taking these criteria into consideration, Chan and his team devised an ingenious idea: they turned the front of the house to its side. This reorientation gives the semi-detached house a bungalow-like feel.

"The most crucial parties involved for each of our projects are in fact we and the owner. The communication between these two has to be precise, honest and constant. We will usually take the client's brief in the very beginning of each project and formulate our own vision around the brief instead of trying to counter it," says Chan.









He continues, "Our design point of view is that the house is essentially not ours. We facilitate the process of making each house more of a home than any other house for each of our clients. The rigorous interviews and discussions that we have with each of our clients involving their needs and lifestyle allow us to design a space that is 'made to measure' to each of our clients."

The new home is dominated by wooden elements, a nod to exclusive resorts in exotic tropical destinations frequented by the homeowner. Marble tiles in the dining area and bathroom augment the luxurious feel. The furniture used consists of neutral colours like grey and black with pops of red while soft furnishings like curtains and bedlinens in beige and taupe.

Natural light pour into the home through large windows, creating a bright and airy atmosphere. The windows also offer a good view of the verdant garden. The home is, essentially, a bolt hole in the bustling city, providing repose for its occupants.



OPPOSITE PAGE LEFT
Wooden elements dominate the living space.

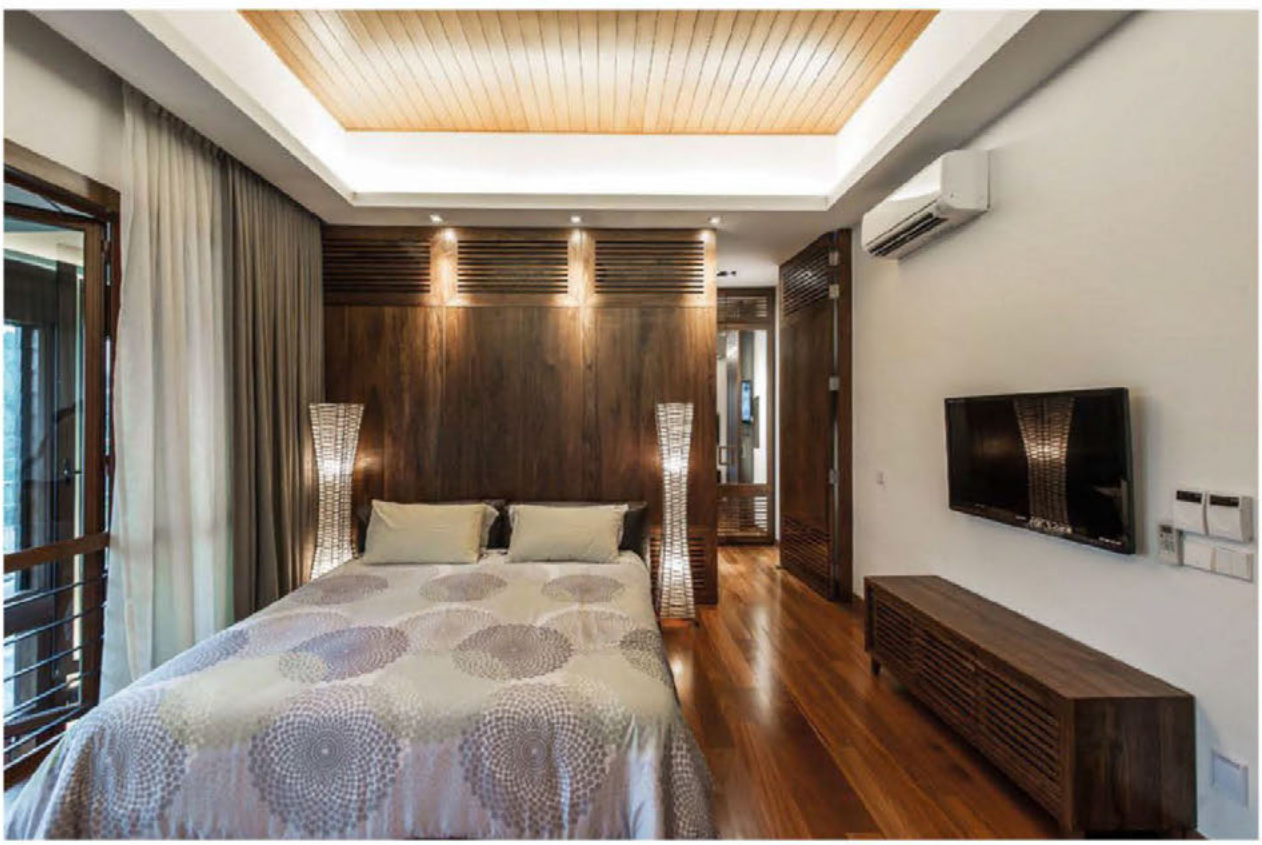
OPPOSITE PAGE BOTTOM LEFT
Marble tiles in the dining room up the luxe quotient.

BELOW
Netural soft furnishings blend well with wooden elements, creating a sense of repose.

Designing this home, for Chan, however, was not a stroll in the park. One of the main challenges he faced was to retain much of the original structure, whose ceilings where low. "The original floor to ceiling height was only three metre high, which is relatively low for today's standards. Planning of the M&E ducts, light points and the ceiling design had to be done carefully to optimise whatever height that we had," he reveals. "Embellishments on the ceiling like pendant lamps and fans were also kept to a minimal to 'lighten' the feel of the ceiling and to not accentuate the ceiling's lack of height."

If anything, the home embodies all three aspects that EDI always set out to fulfil in each of its projects. "Functionality – everything in the home serves a purpose. Connectivity – this includes circulation, lighting and ventilation. We get worried when there's a dead end," Chan says with a laugh. "Finally, timelessness. We prefer designs that are not flashy or too trendy, lest it becomes outdated in a short period of time. The design of each home has to work with the owner and his family for years to come and has to age gracefully."

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"Finally, timelessness. We prefer designs that are not flashy or too trendy, lest it becomes outdated in a short period of time."

BLU WATER STUDIO

Interior design is not just about using available space to the fullest and making a place look great – important though it is. It is really about making life better.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE DESIGNER
Lai Siew Hong

DESIGN TEAM
Nashzelima Ngadmin, Mak Sook Har, Lee Ping Seng, Bernice Chan, Patrick Ong, Paul Sim, Cassandra Sasso

"Good interior design generates a sense of wellbeing," declares Lai Siew Hong, Chief Executive Designer of Blu Water Studio. "The right combination between the interior space and the elements within it can make us feel good, positive and happy. It is about discovering those elements and bringing them together to create those feelings."

And that was exactly what he did for The Vale. The property, consisting of 98 townhouses in the quiet Sutera Damansara, has recently been summoned into stylish existence by Lai and his team, with nature as the main source of inspiration. Owing to the fact that The Vale sits on a hillside with the Kota Damansara Community Forest as its backdrop, the client wanted elements of nature to find its way into the homes while maintaining a sleek and minimalist interior.

"The warmth and character of the space were keys to creating a tranquil atmosphere and the utilisation of all spaces ensured a clean and streamlined interior space," says Lai."Through the choices of materials, the play of light and healthy activities encouraged in the space,The Vale is to be a peaceful retreat for its owners."



BELOW
Natural elements found their way into The Vale's clean, minimalist interior.





Lai and his team decided that each townhouse would have synchronised yet distinctive looks. The one on the ground level inspired by the land while the other the sky. The biggest challenge was to come up with two entirely different schemes based on the same concept, yet still ensures that both designs would appeal to the market.

The ground level townhouse is a celebration of soft, organic forms and textures found in the countryside while the upper level one sees a strong play of light and shadow reminiscent of, as Lai puts it so poetically, "rays of sunlight that filter through forest canopy". Neutral colours like brown, beige, grey and white hold court in both townhouses punctuated by bold shots of black.

"Interior design is not just about using available space to the fullest and making a place look great – important though it is. It is really about making life better," Lai shares. "The most important aspect is that the space has to speak to the individual and in turn enhances his lifestyle. It delivers comfort, security and privacy. And of course,

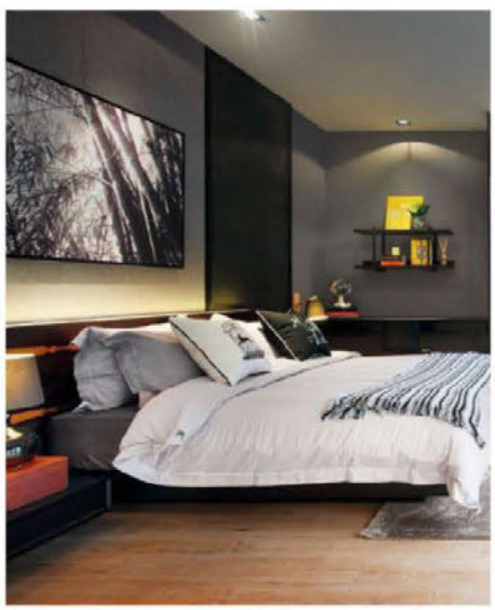
OPPOSITE PAGE TOP
Lai's palette consists of beige, brown, grey and white. Black is used as an accent colour.

OPPOSITE PAGE BOTTOM
Light and shadow interplay in the upper level townhouse.

ABOVE
The ground level townhouse sees a celebration of organic forms.

"The most important aspect is that the space has to speak to the individual and in turn enhances his lifestyle. It delivers comfort, security and privacy."





by expressing the character of the occupants, it makes a home both personal and distinctive."

Lai tells us that a space is an animate object; and to transform a house into a home, interior designers approach it by understanding its characteristics such as its shape and the source of light. This is followed by determining how the space is used and the types of activities that will take place within in. The process is concluded by the embellishment of the space via materials, furniture, colours and lighting, thus creating what he calls the "final showpiece".

The client bought the Blu Water team's "showpiece" and Lai feels fortunate that both parties shared a similar vision from the very beginning. "The client set the tone and requirements for the project and has the final say and the ability to push the project in a particular direction. The interior designers support the idea and vision and if necessary will also bring in specialists for lighting, landscaping and so on, this ensures each scope is fully covered," he says.

"When the client and the designers are in sync with one another it creates the perfect working relationship, we just expanded upon certain ideas and philosophies to achieve the final result," Lai concludes.

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PDI DESIGN & ASSOCIATES

Always passionate, fascinated and versatile about our designs; always reinventing design solutions and whenever possible we find ways to stay current with new trends and technologies.

DESIGN DIRECTOR
Ooi BS

ASSOCIATES PARTNER
Lisa Ong

SENIOR DESIGNER
Stella Song

When PDI Design & Associates was asked to design a Mutiara Villa super-link show unit at Mutiara Heights, Kajang for the developer TLS Group, Design Director Ooi BS envisioned a space for a growing family. The built up is 3,260 square feet and the team wanted to accommodate a family with three children on the upper floors and a guest room on the lower floor.

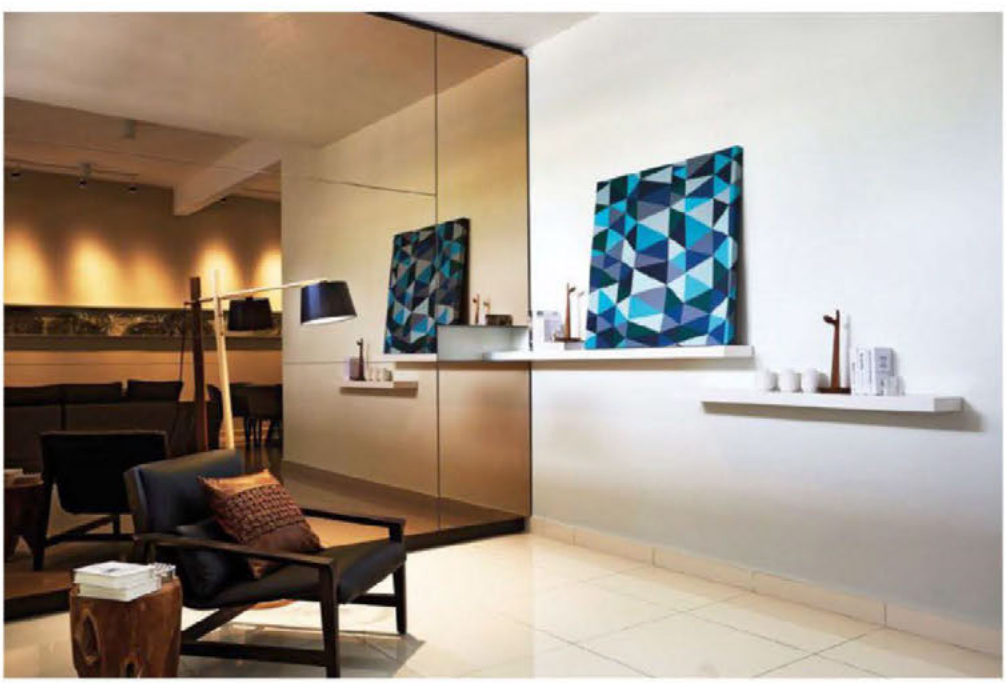
The interior has to be casual, intimate and provide comfort and yet still elegant. There is a 12-foot ceiling on the ground floor and numerous generous high ceilings in other spaces throughout the house.

As the double volume space in the living room is bathed in natural light, the team designed an interior to complement and collaborate with the architecture and design, and especially to showcase the generous open space.

"We were inspired to create a comfortable and modern space, saturated with elements of design by using metal art and laser cut layered geometric patterns as features. The artwork has a mixture of masculinity and femininity with bold basic colors complementing each other," says Ooi.

OPPOSITE PAGE
Geometric shaped lamps at the breakfast nook gives the place a modern aesthetic.

RIGHT
Glass separates the areas in the house, lending an openness to the space.



Throughout the project, the creative process was harmonious and designer and client were both able to understand each other's point of view.

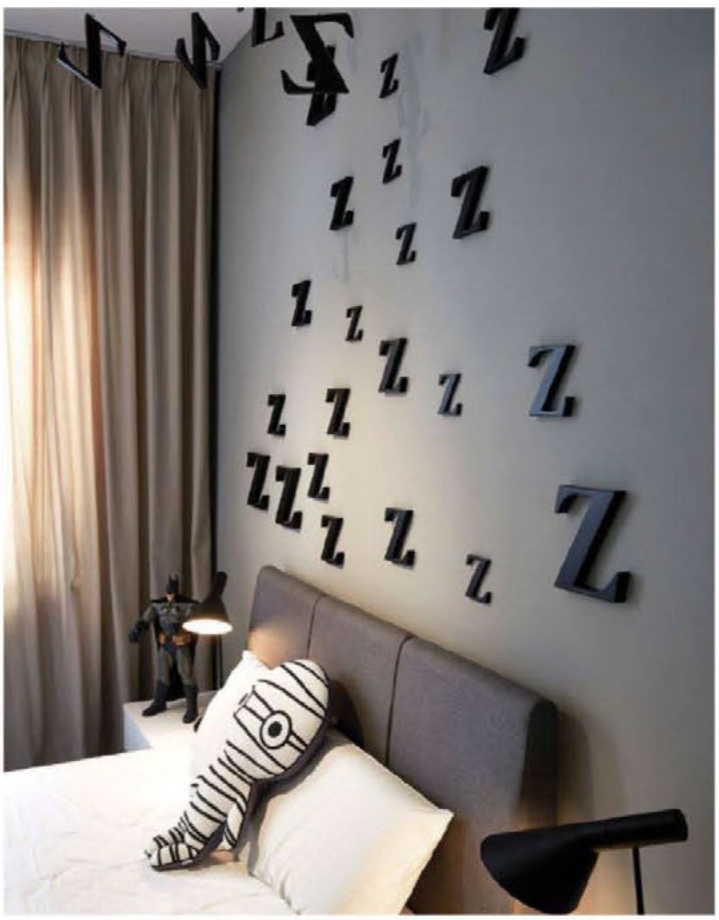
"Our vision and the client's brief were as one, we were able to strike this balance due to the trust and understanding in working with the requirements. We were able to coordinate the design with the space presented to us." The team worked with the modern architecture of the house and created a space that was streamlined and functional. They also used artwork and accessories to bring out this modern minimalism. Ample storage was built into the rooms to allow for real living.

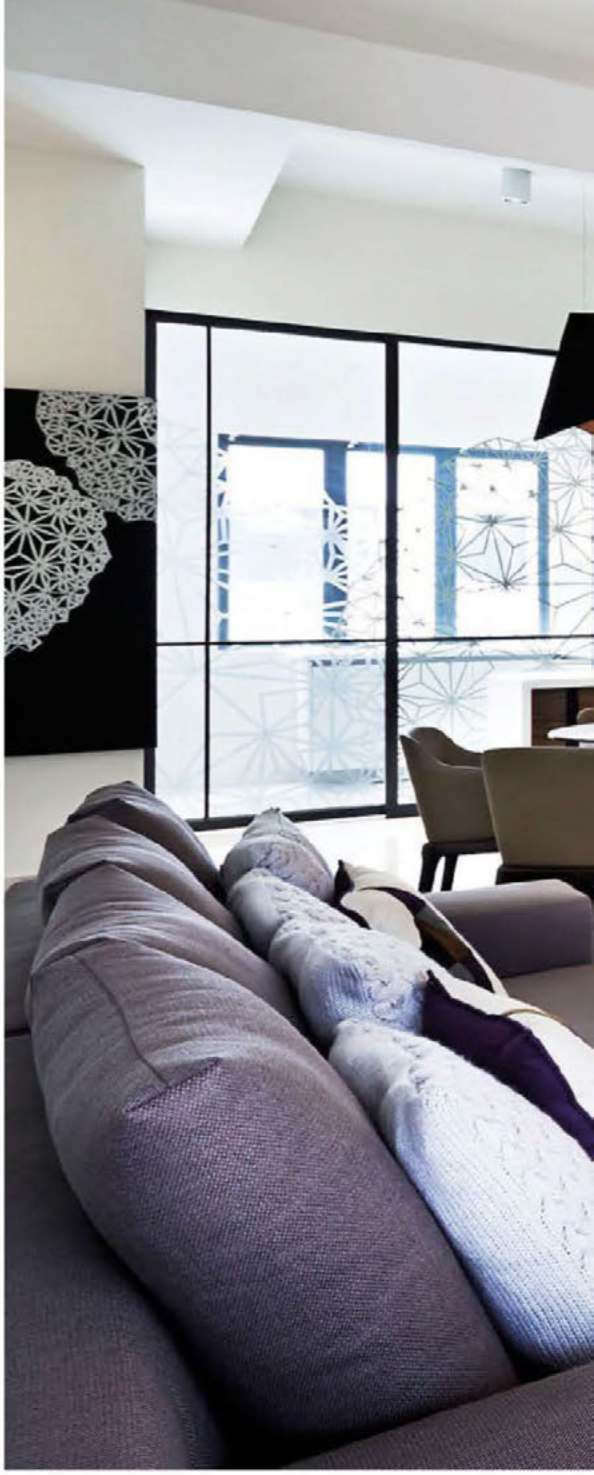
The colour scheme was kept neutral, with shades of warm wood running through the house. The living room had both architectural and decorative lighting to create a calm, inspiring space. They used glass to separate areas in the house, making the space look even bigger and infusing a serenity that usually comes with glass.

The kitchen and dining area were designed for family time and entertaining guests. The area

BOTTOM
Interesting graphic elements adorn the wall of one of the bedrooms.

RIGHT
The living space flows effortlessly into the dining area, creating a cohesive and cosy space.





"Our vision and the client's brief were as one, we were able to strike this balance due to the trust and understanding in working with the requirements."



is kept casual but elegant, and the use of geometric pendant lighting gave off a cool modern vibe.

The bedrooms are infused with a touch of luxury, with high quality upholstery and a muted colour scheme. Again, geometric art is featured prominently, bringing together the design of the whole house.

Shelvings in the kids' rooms are kept open, and these juxtapose against the bare walls as decorative elements as well.

According to Ooi, when starting a project, designers should take into the client's input and requirements. This will set the design direction and the planning. His approach to space design is to look at the usage of the space first. Then the design will fall in place. ●

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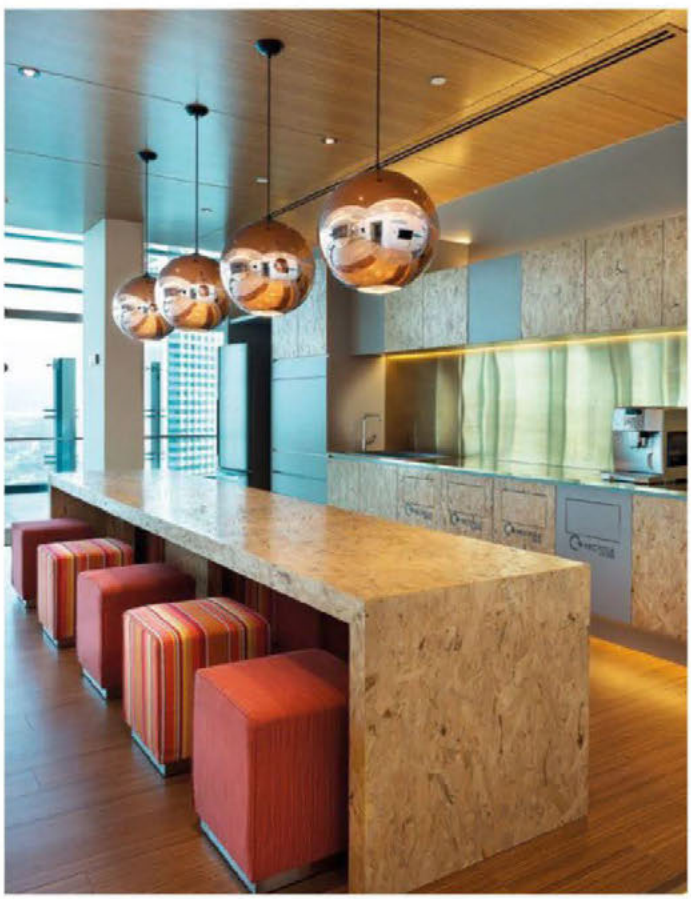
iPARTNERSHIP

We offer intrinsic quality of design. We tease out the DNA of briefs and infuse them with our vision.

MANAGING PARTNER
Indra Ramanathan

CAD MANAGER
Mohd Ulul Azmi

INTERIOR DESIGNER
Hizza Zazali



OPPOSITE PAGE
Activity based work areas enable to employees to perform different activities in different settings.

THIS PAGE
A café bar (flexible energy hub), which serves as a pantry, is in bright cheerful colours and faces the reception in the spacious office.

iPartnership has been immersed in the creation of a new office fit for a multinational company involved in construction and development. Spearheaded by Indra Ramanathan, the project is based on the concept of activity based work (ABW) areas to house approximately 50 work stations for full-time staff and 10 for part timers.

The concept of ABW means, employees perform different activities in different settings of space. They do not do everything at the desk," Indra explains. Their client's proposal was to have designated areas for collaborative, focus and quiet activities for its workers. "The breakout between these meeting areas, promotes interaction and the exchange of ideas in a productive manner."

"We want to celebrate the entrance space," he says. At the reception area, the designers make use of the strategic height of the office, using large glazed walls to give workers a pronounced view of the outside world and also to maximise the use of natural daylight. A café bar (flexible energy hub), which serves as a pantry, is in bright cheerful colours and faces the reception in the spacious office. Being innovative, the designers subtly incorporated the ▶



glass dividers, doors and walls with the company's identity through descriptive words and coloured stripes.

Graphics of the Kuala Lumpur skyline grace the dividing doors in the meeting rooms as they reflect the company's multinational status. A long bamboo corridor with chairs are placed along a wall so that staff members can sit back and relax. Storage surfaces are covered with rows of plants in between desks, giving the feel of clean and fresh space.

The office space, located on level 31 in Menara Binjai, Jalan Ampang is the first corporate office to be certified with Green Based Interior (GBI). A GBI certified built interiors require the usage of green materials which are sourced from various countries. In this case, recyclable carpets, bamboos and paints of low Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) are used.

Indra considers the client's brief and the collaborative effort with the client throughout the project, is important. "As designers, it is important to have your own vision and at the same time, follow your client's brief. But it is extremely important to challenge it creatively. In this case, we have also worked closely with mechanical engineers and graphic consultants. In other projects, we work with suppliers and lighting consultants."



"As designers, it is important to have your own vision and at the same time, follow your client's brief. But it is extremely important to challenge it creatively."



LEFT
A relaxing area looks out over a view of Kuala Lumpur, with plenty of natural light.

BOTTOM
A graphic of the Kuala Lumpur skyline within the office represents the company's multinational status.

iPartnership's journey through this successful project is not without challenges, especially when the workers have had a fixed working environment for the last 15 years. "The challenge here is to convince people that space is the right way to have more collaboration and do better work," he says.

Apart from the completed project, iPartnership is currently involved in building the head office for Lembaga Getah Malaysia. "We are the concept master planner. It is at the documentation stage and earth works have started. The expected year of completion is 2017," he says. The 17-storey building will be located at Sungai Buloh.

Indra says he would like to try his hand at designing a museum, a public building and a corporate building. "I would like to design a museum, one that is like the national museum. Actually, a special residential building would be great! I would design it from the interior out, to provide the entire experience of coming home, which starts from the entrance. " His best advice to homeowners is to keep things simple and not to have too many colours. "Do not have more than three colours," he says.

But when it comes to designing buildings, he reasoned that it should be about, "smarter buildings, buildings that matter in life. Things need to be thought through when designing. An adequate amount of innovation is needed and people should be thinking when they're doing it. It should be something iconic, but it does not mean it will look weird." ●

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THE H&D GIFT GUIDE 2014



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THE PARTY HOST

The ingredients to a successful dinner party.













1 LAURA ASHLEY REGENT SCROLL PLACEMAT
Placemats are an easy way to spice up your dining table. RM69 per set of four, from Metrojaya.

2 LAURA ASHLEY CERAMIC MISTLETOE CAKESTAND
Cakestand are perfect for serving finger food and drinks, too. RM239, from Metrojaya.

3 KIIRO YELLOW BASE FLORAL PLATE
Imported from Japan. RM50, from Crockerette.

4 LSA DOME TRIO & PADDLE
Hors d'oeurves have never looks so tempting before! RM330, from Janine.

5 LAURENCE LLEWELYN BOWEN LET THEM EAT CAKE SPOON SET
Fancy spoons are the perfect companion of a decadent dessert. RM189 per set of three, from Robinsons.

6 GUZZINI SAND ACRYLIC BOWL
Kids will want to eat salad that is served in this pretty bowl. RM129, from Robinsons.

7 KARTELL ABBRACCIAIO CANDLESTICKS
Tell your loved ones that you love them with a warm embrace. From RM870, from Space.

8 RIEDEL MAMBA DECANTER
A decanter in the shape of a snake. How cool is that? RM1,998, from Robinsons.



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9 SCRIPT OVAL TRAY
An elegant tray to serve your teas and macarons in. RM828, from Barbara Barry.

10 VINTEC NOIR WINE CABINET
Keeps your champagne chilled for that special celebratory moment. Price upon request, from Kitch.

11 TEA SET
A tea party Mad Hatter style with this dainty tea set. RM224, from Bits & Pieces.

12 TEALIGHT HOLDERS
Elements for a successful party include these tealight holders. RM49 each, from BoConcept.

13 R2S SERVINGWARE
Beautiful serveware will surely boost your appetite. From RM49.90, from Metrojaya.


13
PLATES
Elegance

THE DECORATOR

Gifts for those who watch Million Dollar Decorator on repeat.

[OUR PICKS]
Cushions that add colour and texture to your home. Clockwise from top left.

SATIN CUSHION COVER
RM49.90, from H&M Home.

HOMEMADE CUSHION
RM169, from BoConcept.

HIRANYA GRASS CUSHION
Price upon request, from Janine.

1 CERAMIC OWL ORNAMENT
Speak no evil, hear no evil and see no evil. How's that as a 2015 resolution? RM96 for three, from Bits & Pieces.

2 ELEPHANT SCULPTURE
Few things make a statement as big as a pink elephant in glasses. RM169, from BoConcept.





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3 METAL BASKET
Wire baskets are the most versatile accessories – on the kitchen counter, the bathroom rack and the vanity table. RM69.90 (big) and RM49.90 (small), from H&M Home.

4 LAURA ASHLEY LAMP
Its antique brass base gives this table lamp a unique character. RM299 (shade) and RM459 (base), from Metrojaya.

5 VINTERFINT TABLE RUNNER
A Midas' touch to complete the table setting. RM12.90, from Ikea.

6 VITRA WOODEN DOLLS
Alexander Girard's colourful wooden effigies are perennial favourites. From RM490 each, from Space.



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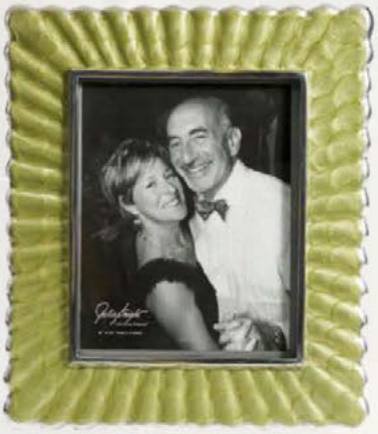
7 TRIPOD FLOOR LAMP
Channel your inner director with this tri-legged floor lamp. Action! RM1,120, from Bits & Pieces.

8 GEORGE CAPSULE DIFFUSER
You've heard of capsule coffees. Now you must try this capsule diffuser. Price unavailable, from Mr & Mrs.

9 UPSIDE DOWN VASE
Position it the way you want it. Price unavailable, from Ligne Roset.

10 CALVIN ARMCHAIR
A chair perfect to curl up in on cool, lazy days. RM1,334, from Harvey Norman.





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THE FREQUENT FLYER

Stylish essentials for the globetrotter.

1 JULIA KNIGHT PHOTO FRAME
Immortalise memories of your trip with this elegant photo frame. Price unavailable, from Robinsons.

2 SLEEP MASK
Taking a nap has never been so fashionable with this sequinned sleep mask. RM24.90, from H&M Home.

3 NIKON COOLPIX L29 COMPACT CAMERA
Capture precious moments of your voyage with this 16.1-megapixel compact camera. RM216, from Harvey Norman.

4 APPLE IPOD SHUFFLE
The Apple iPod Shuffle keeps you entertained throughout your journey. It comes in fun colours. RM168, from Harvey Norman.

5 VITRA CHAIRLESS
This ultra-light and sturdy fabric strap allows you to sit down in a relaxed manner with neither a seat nor backrest. RM110, from Space.

6 CHECKED BLANKET
A comfy blanket to keep you warm throughout your flight. RM119, H&M Home.



THE WRITER

Say bye-bye to the monotonous home office.

[OUR PICKS]
Table lamps that help you read and write better. Clockwise from top right.

CONTAINER LAMP
Price upon request, from Ligne Roset.

HEXAGON TABLE LAMP
RM1,089, from BoConcept.

KARTELL MINI TAJ TABLE LAMP
RM1,040, from Space.

1 VITRA GEORGE NELSON TABLE CLOCK
A futuristic-looking table clock helps you keep track of time. From RM1,350, from Space.

2 BOOKENDS
A touch of nostalgia on your book case with these bookends. RM180, from Bits & Pieces.



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OUR PICKS



3 ELEGANT OVAL CUP
An elegant home for your writing instruments. RM300, from Barbara Barry.

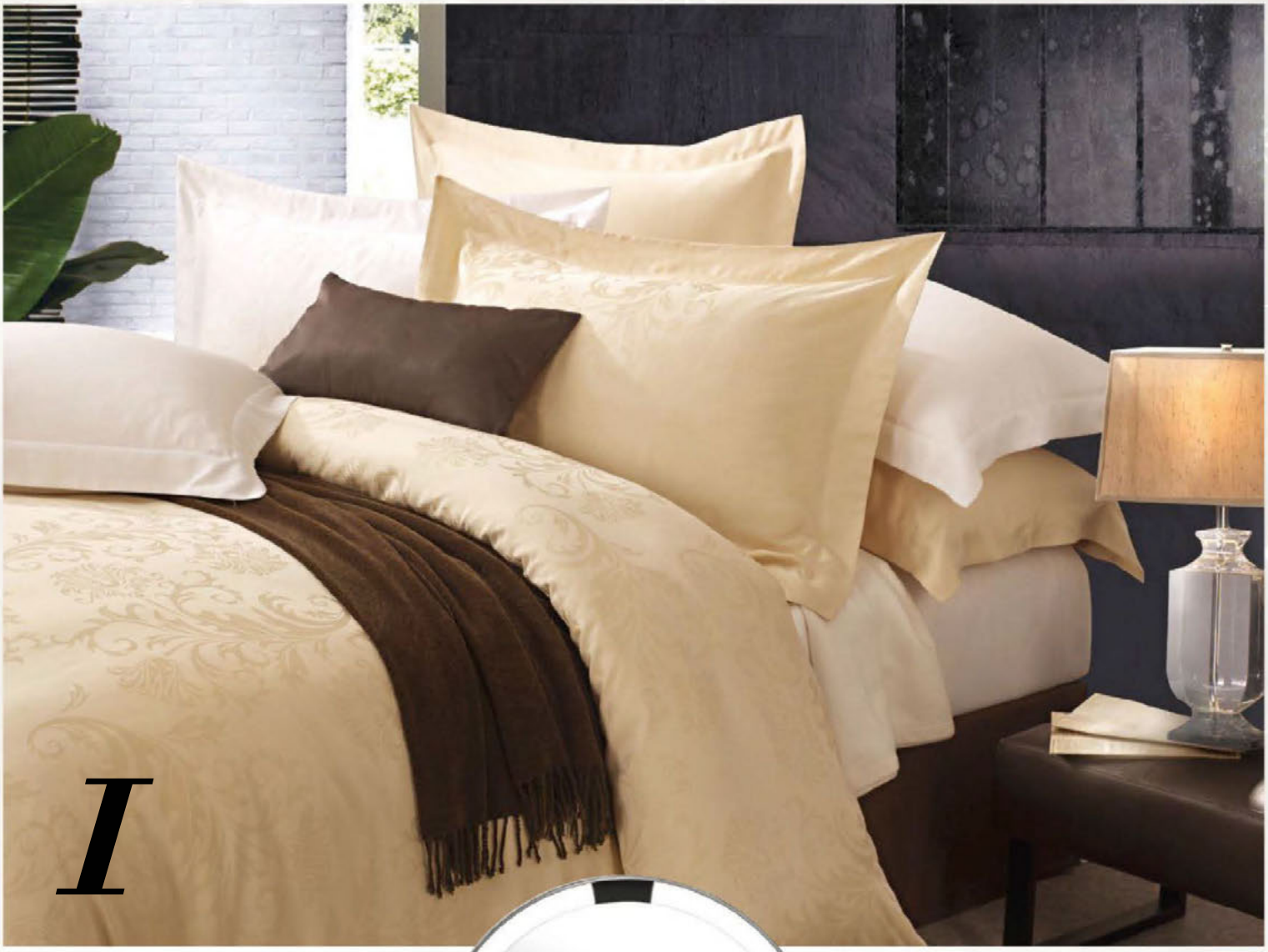
4 OKI TRAYS
Keep your desk organised with these classy trays. RM289, from BoConcept.

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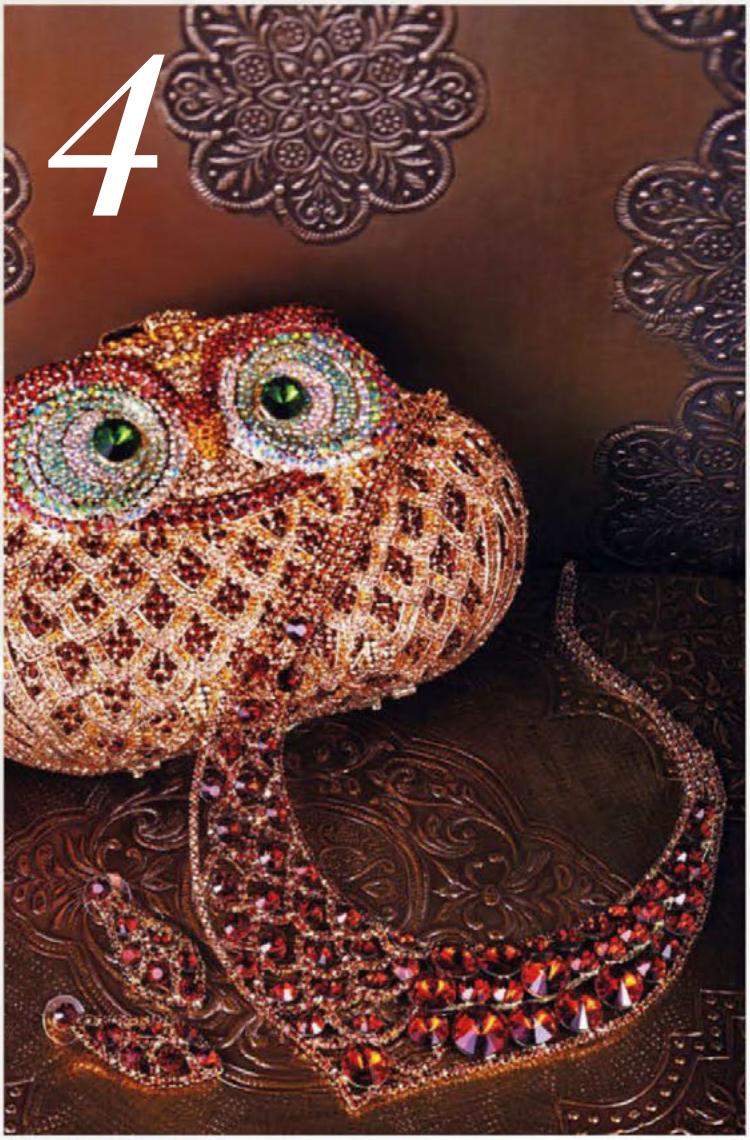
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THE BACHELORETTE

À la mode pieces to spice up the single lady's life.





1 OASIS LIVING VERDURE BEDLINEN
Replicate the comfort of a five-star hotel room with the Oasis Living Verdure bedlinen. From RM2,980, from Robinsons.

2 SIMPLE HUMAN SENSOR MIRROR
It's a magic mirror: it lights up automatically when your face approaches. RM1,599, from Robinsons.

3 LUXE ORGANISER
Fancy home for your priced jewellery. RM420 (small), RM540 (medium) and RM708 (large), from Barbara Barry.

4 3 P.CL+ DIAMANTE CRYSTAL CLUTCH
An unconventional clutch can bring an outfit to a whole new level. RM1,260, from Metrojaya.

5 LIVING QUARTERS DRESS ORNAMENT
A lady can never have too many dresses. A miniature one is essential, even. RM17.90, from Metrojaya.

6 O PENDANT
Designed by renowned artist Ivan Lam, the facets on his O pewter pendant for Royal Selangor allude life's ups and downs. Price upon request, from Royal Selangor.

7 BAYLIS & HARDING GIFT SET
The Baylis & Harding gift set for a full body pampering. RM78-RM228, from Metrojaya.





THE COOK

Gadgets and accessories to assist both the novice and seasoned home cooks.

1 VINTERKUL ROLLING PASTRY CUTTER
The Vinterkul rolling pastry cutter allows you to make multiple shapes at one go. RM5.90, from Ikea.

2 MORPHY RICHARDS TOASTER
A retro-looking toaster? Say no more, we're game. RM268, from Harvey Norman.

3 BOSKA DUTCH CHEESE KNIFE SET
Who knew you'd need four different knives just to cut cheese? Only the real foodie knows. RM99.90, from Robinsons.

4 COTTON TABLE CLOTH
A rustic cotton table cloth gives your kitchen table a unique flair. RM79.90, from H&M Home.

5 METAL TRIVET
Rest assured, these snowflakes won't melt against a searing hot pot. RM29.90 each, from H&M Home.

6 LE CREUSET FRENCH OVEN
Le Creuset. Enough said. RM1,588, from Robinsons.

7 VINTERKUL APRON
Channel the festive mood with this red cotton apron. RM17.90, from Ikea.

8 VINTERKUL PASTRY CUTTER
Shape your pastries into the silhouette of a crown, a bow, a star, a moustache and a knitted hat. RM7.90 for five, from Ikea.





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THE LITTLE ONE

Kids will be delighted with these special treats.

1 DESIGNERS GUILD DINOSAUR VALLEY CUSHION
Dinosaurs received a new lease of life on cushion covers. Price unavailable, from Janine.

2 LAMBORGHINI REMOTE CONTROL CAR
No boys will say no to fast cars. RM99.90, from Metrojaya.

3 MILKY FOLDABLE BEAN BAG
Bean bags for reading. Or playing video games. RM783, from Harvey Norman.

4 VITRA MINIATURE HEART CONE CHAIR
Kids will grow out of this chair but the love will never fade away. RM12,510 from Space.

5 VINTER 2014 SLIPPERS
These slippers are the perfect substitute for gift-bearing socks. RM39.90 per pair, from Ikea.



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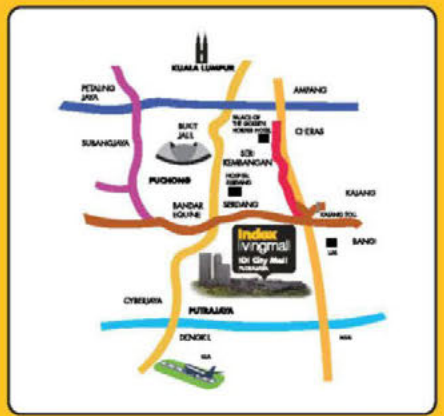
SALE! Save up to 50 per cent on designers' pieces at the Space End of Year Sale. Till 21 December.



Index Living Mall, Thailand's leading home furnishing and decorative retail store, co-operation with AEON CO. (M) BHD. established new Joint Venture company AEON INDEX LIVING SDN. BHD., launches its first store in Malaysia at the IOI City Mall in Putrajaya.

With over 5,500 m² space dedicated to infinite ideas and design inspiration of home decorative items and furniture.

Moreover, home lovers can enjoy ranges of home solutions services from professional team of design specialists, healthy sleeping specialists as well as professional delivery & installation team that will be on-site to fulfill your dreams of a perfect home.



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text NG YI XIANG & WENSHAN PANG

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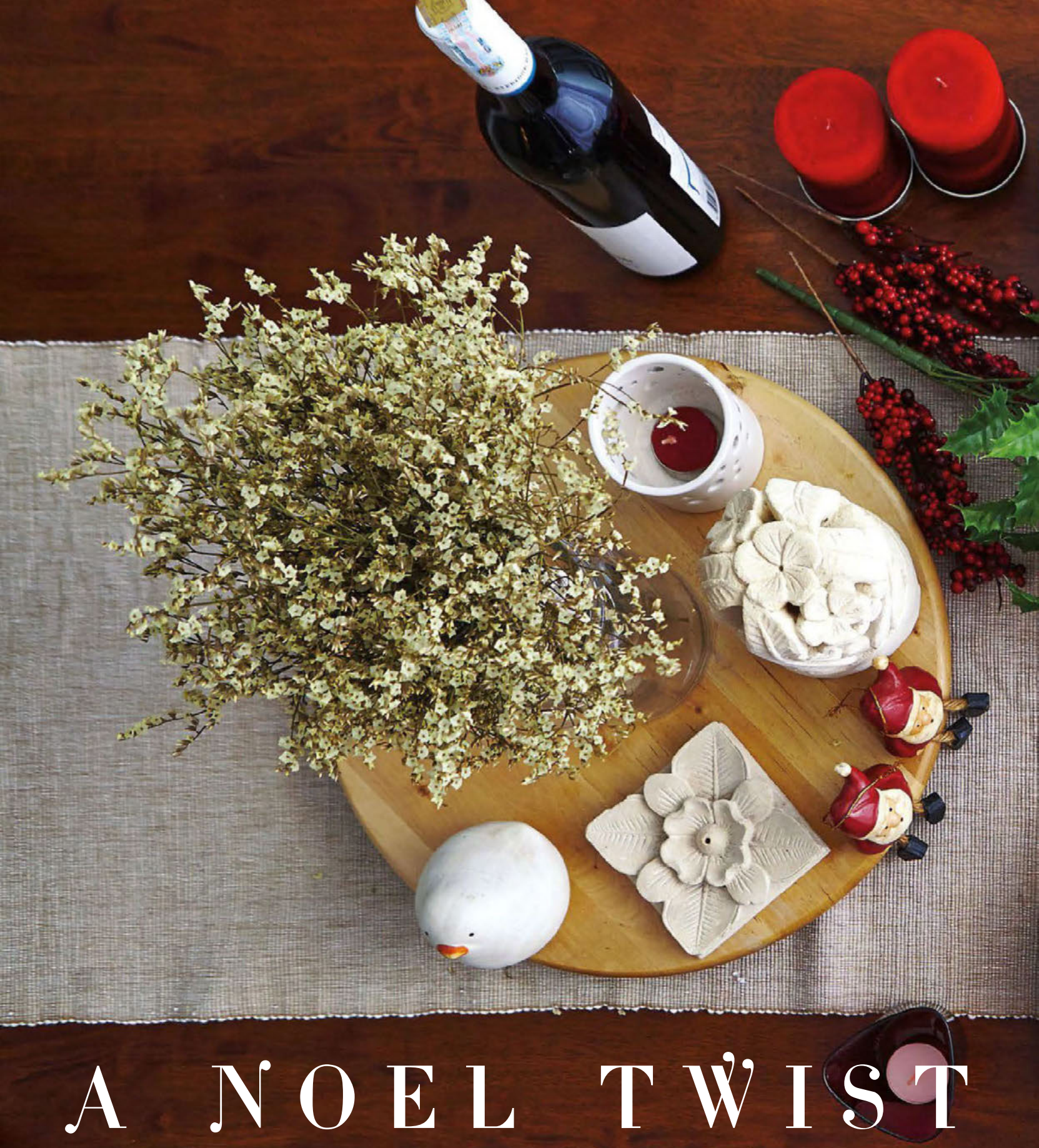
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Life's Inspirations



A NOEL TWIST

The chefs of supper club Transparent Apron prepares a special Christmas dish and give us a glimpse of their world of gastronomy.



Nick Au and Ryonn Leong may have disparate backgrounds but a strong friendship was forged as a result of their undying love for singing – and, cooking. The duo met at the Young KL Singers choir group years ago and it wasn't too long before they began taking turns to host dinner parties where family members and friends were invited to try their concoctions.

In 2011, when Ryonn was on his way back to Kuala Lumpur from Penang, he had an epiphany: to run a supper club. Without wasting one moment, he called Nick and his partner-to-be was game almost instantly. Transparent Apron was born. The partners host dinner parties once or twice a month from Ryonn's condo, whose exact location remains a mystery to diners till the day of the dinner.

Nick and Ryonn have created a special Christmas dish for *Home & Decor* readers and you can find the recipe on the following pages. Instead of a turkey or a chicken, the Transparent Apron boys decide to spice up Christmas by preparing a duck. According to them, a typical French-style Christmas duck is roasted and stuffed with chestnuts and bread and their version is a "deconstructed" one. Each component is individually cooked and finally assembled. "Feel free to arrange however you like it!" they urge.



What are the five ingredients you can't live without? *Nick Au:* Salt, butter, olive oil, pork and duck fat.

Ryonn Leong: Salt, white pepper, chilli, lime and garlic.

What is your favourite dish? *NA:* Roasted chicken. I like it because one can enjoy two different textures from the same meat: the skin is crispy while the meat is succulent. In addition, it's a dish that's very easy to put together.

RL: I cook Asam Laksa very often. It is a dish that is associated with my childhood. It has a sentimental value to it.

Who are your favourite foodies? *NA:* I'm a big fan of Dan Barber, a chef who operates a restaurant called Blue Hill at the Stone Barns Centre of Food Agriculture where contemporary cuisine is served using local ingredients from the Barns. He believes that food doesn't come from the chef's hands but from the farmer's, and that the taste of food is directly influenced by the way animals or vegetables were grown. Besides Barber, I'm also inspired by Michael Ruhlman, a food writer who has a special focus on food preservation techniques such as brining, dry-curing, pickling and smoking.

RL: I'm following a Swedish chef called Luke Robinson (@gullychef) on Instagram. His photos give me a glimpse of Swedish cuisine. But my all-time favourite foodie is – hands down – Debbie Teoh, a famed Nyonya chef who brings Peranakan cuisine into the slow food scene. She has held numerous events abroad to promote the Peranakan culture; she transforms it into a movement.

Can you tell us about your kitchen? *NA:* The kitchen [in Ryonn's condo] is small and due to the spatial limitations, we're forced to work more efficiently. I believe that, when it comes to kitchens, the bigger doesn't mean the better. Initially, we had only a single galley kitchen and it wasn't until recently that we installed the kitchen trolleys against the wall facing the kitchen. The front-and-back layout allows us to switch from one station to another with minimal movements. And because the space is minute, utensils and ingredients are within arm's reach. We keep the kitchen organised so we don't lose precious space. Many homeowners prefer to use cabinets but we like open shelves. They are great for storing frequently used items.

LEFT
The chefs of Transparent Apron: Ryonn Leong (left) and Nick Au.

OPPOSITE PAGE
The kitchen worktop is comprised of two kitchen trolleys.





"Open your mind and experiment. There's a lot of joy in creating something that surprises you."

THE PERFECT DINNER PARTY

Being supper club owners, Nick and Ryonn have mastered the role of the perfect host. Here are some tips.

1. Remember that you're throwing a party at home, not at a restaurant. So it's important to make your guests feel homey.

2. Tell your guests what dishes you've prepared and share with them the story behind each dish.

3. Create a cosy ambience by leaving only a few lamps on that exude warm, welcoming glows.

4. We always play jazz on the stereo.

5. Fresh flowers are an easy way to perk up the dinner table. They are cheap, too.

6. There's nothing that delights the guests than having personalised place cards. A little gesture goes a long way.

7. Serve only when all guests have arrived. While waiting, serve drinks. Some psychologists have proven that when drinks are served in between courses, guests are tricked into thinking that the intervals between courses are shorter.

8. Ideally, the duration between the first course and the last lies within two hours.

9. If your guests still linger long after the dinner is done, start cleaning up the place or washing the dishes. They'll get the hint.

Where do you get your inspiration from? *NA:* Oddly, I get my inspiration while I'm driving – well, stuck in the traffic jam. I almost never turn on the radio and when I sit quietly in the car I would start to reminisce flavours of the dishes that I've tasted before. Questions like "what if's" and "how to's" would pop into my head while I deconstruct a certain dish and attempt to assemble its components together – often in my own order. I let my mind wander. The experience is almost like dreaming. The most memorable dish I've ever concocted as a result of my musings was a Chinese-style risotto.

RL: I get ideas from watching TV and reading recipe books. As my day job requires frequent travelling, I have the privilege of sampling food from many countries around the world. Every time I consume something interesting, I'd wonder immediately how I can re-create it at home.

Any tips for the novice cook? *NA:* Work clean, eat clean and you'll have a clean mind.

RL: Open your mind and experiment. There's a lot of joy in creating something that surprises you.



LEFT
Ryonn's cookbooks in his kitchen.

SPICED DUCK, CHESTNUT PURÉE AND TRUFFLED POTATOES

CHESTNUT PURÉE

- 100gm Chestnut, peeled
- 200gm Heavy cream
- 10gm Golden syrup
- Pinch of salt

1) Place unpeeled chestnuts into a pot of boiling water and let them simmer for 30 minutes. Remove and plunge them into an ice bath to prevent further cooking.
2) Use a small sharp knife and slit into the chestnut to start peeling individual chestnut. Place peeled chestnuts into a saucepan.
3) Fill the saucepan with enough cream to fill and cover the chestnuts. Place onto a stovetop and let the content simmer until chestnuts are soft.
4) Add the chestnuts and cream into a blender and blend until smooth. Add golden syrup and salt to taste. The purée should be silky smooth and creamy. Set aside till service.

BALSAMIC GASTRIQUE

- 100gm Castor sugar
- 75ml Water
- 100ml Balsamic vinegar

1) Add sugar and water into a pan. Heat content until sugar is caramelised.
2) Tilt the pan away from you and pour in balsamic vinegar.
3) Cook the gastrique until it appears sticky and syrupy. Leave to cool aside.

SPICE MIX

- 1.5 tsp Cumin
- 1 tsp Coriander seed
- 1 tsp Cinnamon
- 1 tsp Black pepper
- 1 tsp Cardamom seed
- 0.5 tsp Tumeric powder
- 1 tsp Sumac

1) Toast all spices in a pan gently over a stove until aromatic.
2) Grind toasted spices in a spice grinder until fine. Set aside.

TRUFFLED POTATOES

- 2 pcs Potatoes, pink variety
- 10 gm Butter
- 100ml Fresh milk
- 1 tsp Truffle paste
- Pinch of salt

1) Peel potatoes and cut into thick one centimetre-long batons.
2) Place in a sous-vide bag along with milk, butter, truffle paste and salt. Leave in refrigerator to marinate for 24 hours.
3) Remove from refrigerator and cook in sous-vide water bath at a temperature of 87 degrees Celsius or 188 degrees Fahrenheit for one hour.
4) Remove from water bath and cool in an ice bath. Set aside till service.

NICK'S TIP!

If you're using an oven to cook the duck breasts, stick a thermometer into the meat and remove from oven when temperature reaches 56 degrees Celsius or 136 degrees Fahrenheit.

DUCK BREAST

- 2 Duck breasts
- 2 tsp Spice mix

1) Remove all sinews and silver skin on duck breasts. Trim duck fats to a minimum.
2) Score the surface of duck skin in a criss-cross pattern with a sharp knife.
3) Rub spice mix onto duck breasts and skin.
4) Pack the breasts into a sous-vide bag and vacuum pack. Leave to marinate in refrigerator for 24 hours.
5) Remove from refrigerator and cook the duck breasts in sous-vide at a temperature of 57 degrees Celsius or 135 degrees Fahrenheit for two hours.
6) Remove from water bath and put the bag straight into an ice bath until cool. Set aside till service.

SPICED CRUMBS

- 1 slice Sourdough / baguette
- 50gm Chestnut, chopped roughly
- 10gm Butter, unsalted
- 1 tsp Spice mix

1) Cut sourdough / baguette into small cubes of about 3 mm.
2) Peel the chestnuts and chop them roughly.
3) Put the butter into a low heat pan and add the sourdough / baguette and chestnut. Gently cook until golden brown.
4) Remove from pan once done and onto a paper towel to remove excess oil. Sprinkle spice mix and pinch of salt to season. Set aside till service.

ASSEMBLY FOR SERVICE

1) Remove duck breasts from sous-vide bag and pat it dry with a paper towel. Put some cooking oil into a cold pan and rest the duck breast, skin-side down. Switch on the stove to the lowest heat setting and gently render all duck fat to crisp up the skin.

2) Use another pan on medium heat with some cooking oil to gently brown the potato batons. Remove from pan once they are nice and golden brown.

3) Once the duck's skin is crispy and with duck fat rendered out, rest the breasts for one minute and cut into thick slices.

4) Serve the duck together with the remainder of the accompaniments in any manner you prefer. Lastly, use the balsamic gastrique to accentuate the dish, and be careful about using too much as the flavour of the gastrique can be quite overwhelming.

For more information about Transparent Apron, visit www.facebook.com/TransparentApron.



text WENSHAN PANG photography DANIEL LAI

OLD TRADITIONS DIE HARD

These designers and entrepreneurs get creative in their efforts to keep culture, traditions and craftsmanship alive in today's modern world.

RENDY HIMAWAN



RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT SENIOR STAFF OF PT INDOVICKERS FURNITAMA, JAKARTA, RENDY HIMAWAN AGED 28, WAS BORN IN SOLO.

As a full-time in-house designer for Indovickers contract office furniture manufacturer, Rendy learned that design is a complex activity involving multi-disciplines. He has since met and worked with creative industrial and interior designers.

Rendy's philosophy is to try to keep everything simple and pay more attention to small things. This and how people behave day-to-day keep him inspired and are reflected in his designs and products. His first project was to design a storage series for residential use, using engineered wood and European veneers to build chests, consoles, tables, coffee tables and cabinets in various sizes.

One of his designs is the Breeze chair, on which he spent countless hours to develop from scratch. It is now mass produced and used by thousands of people during their work day. However, the product that best describes Rendy is Diavolo, the devil chair. "It is a humorous chair which reminds us of the dark side when we sit on it. It uses three different materials which can be formed into any shape, any size with great detail," he says.

The process in designing and producing something is pretty textbook according to Rendy. He starts with a vivid plan of the object, then generate ideas and transforms these into sketches and models. "The crucial and most difficult thing to do is how we transform those visual sketches into reality," he says.

To him, design is a collective process. "Let others help you out," Rendy says. However, he says that product design is getting more and more personalised and democratised. "People want themselves represented in the things they own," he says. Playful designs with a lot of customisation options seem to be a hit.

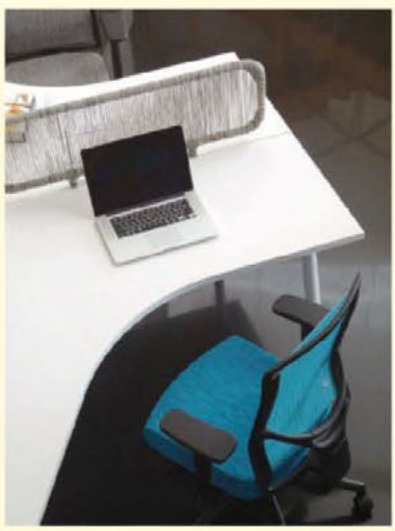
For this, he is grateful that he paid heed to his father's advice to strive hard to get what he dreamt of.

For more information, visit www.rendyhimawan.com



ABOVE
The Diavolo chair was presented at the Biennale Desorin & Kriya in Indonesia.

BOTTOM
The Breeza chair was designed for office workers.



SARTHAK SENGUPTA AND SAHIL BAGGA





LEFT
Patal Table in Blue Meenakari.

BOTTOM
The colourful Sonetto chair under the Katran Collection.

THOUGH THEY LIVE IN THE SAME COUNTRY, INDIA, SARTHAK SENGUPTA AND SAHIL BAGGA MET EACH OTHER IN MILAN, ITALY.

This lighting and furniture design duo met when each was awarded a scholarship to pursue their Masters in Product Service System Design at Politechnico di Milano, Italy by the Italian Chamber of Commerce in 2006.

"There are no designers in my family, but I was always a very hands-on kind of a child and loved to create things on my own," Sahil recalls.

Sarthak's inspiration to become a designer came to light from watching his engineer father work. "My father comes from an age where there were no computers or software to make engineering drawings. As a child I used to observe how he used to draft these complex engineering drawings using basic tools. This inspired me to pursue a creative career."

During a Milan scholarship programme from Scoula Politeca del Design. They were given the opportunity to work for prestigious Italian furniture company, Poltrona Frau Group. They worked on Project I-nova where they gained international perspective on Indian and Asian designs under renowned architect and designer, Giulio Cappellini in 2009.

In the same year, the designers returned to India with the intention to bring various design services to their home country. Thus, they founded their own design studio, Sarthak Sahil Design Co in Delhi. With the company, they set out to preserve local craftsmanship and traditions, through their glocal products (a term coined to describe the combination of global and local appeal).

They are known for their Katran furniture collection. It encourages long term partnerships between the locals. "We try our best to use materials which are eco-friendly, recycled, revived or up-cycled and the ethnic spirit of the product should remain intact even if the final product is very international," say the designers.

The idea of the collection came from the self-spun ropes or coir used to weave traditional Indian day beds called Khatiyas. "The demand and market of this traditional bed has diminished due to urbanisation. The rope sinners as well as the day bed weavers have lost their local market. By adopting this craft, it was our effort to not just revive this material and skills but also to re-contextualise the whole use of these ropes to create contemporary furniture that would penetrate new markets, in India and abroad."

Besides product designing, Sarthak and Sahil Design Co provides installations, graphic and experimental design services. The projects they are currently involved in, includes developing a collection of 20 light installations and the designing of two hotel resorts.

The designers were awarded with the Young Talent Category award at Elle Decor International Design Award in 2011, and product design category at the IDF Design Awards 2013.



For more information, visit www.sahilsarthak.com

"We try our best to use materials which are eco-friendly, recycled, revived or up-cycled and the ethnic spirit of the product should remain intact even if the final product is very international."

DOONYAPOL SRICHAN





THIS THAI DESIGNER EMPHASISES ON QUALITY AND DESIGN IN FURNITURE.

When producing pieces of furniture, Doonyapol relies on both technology as well as craftsmanship to produce the detailing. He says the material, proportion, quality of design and the precise detailing of a piece of furniture refines the silhouette and character of a product.

"The first project I did was for a local company called Podium Holding group. They specialise in wooden furniture and it involves highly skilled craftsmanship," he says. Inspired by people living near the sea in the Southern part of Thailand, he designed a chair called Kradong in 2006. It was produced by Podium. The shelf-like wooden frame of the chair closely resembles the interior of the boats built and designed by the Thai tribes, who adopt inherited skills of building using delicate techniques.

He was further inspired by the Morgan tribes in the southern islands of Thailand. This can be seen in this year's project titled, Morgan, which was produced by Kenkoon, a Thai company known for producing outdoor furniture. Inspired by the simplicity of the houses built by the Morgan tribes, he designed a rounded out-door platform that encourages people to stay and enjoy the outdoor activities from sunrise to sunset. The tribe's sailing techniques inspired a sunshade tied upon three supporting poles at the side of the platforms. As the middle of a tribes' house are used for various purposes, this is reflected on the platform, where the centre can be raised and used as a dining table.

Early this year, the designer realised that the local traditional handcraft techniques are very much alive and still in practice. "After visiting five villages, it is evident that there are many who are skilful in handcrafts. These skills have been passed down from generation to generation." From this project, he learnt various techniques and made almost 30 pieces of work with 10 villages around Thailand. They were exhibited at Tokyo design week, to promote the local crafts in the Japanese market. This project, called SACICT, was a collaboration with the government.

Doonyapol owns a design consultancy, PDM (Product Design Matters) with his Finnish business partner, Sini Henttonen, who specialises in textiles. It was founded in 2011, consulting design brands with concept design strategy, product design and manufacturing development. Their first project as a team, begins with Sini's observation on the lack of carpet and mats used in Thailand. Hence, the PDM Mat Project in 2013 came about.

Currently, they are collaborating with Japanese home furnishing company, Franc Franc to produce steel tables for the Japanese market. Apart from that, they are also working on new collections for leather company, Letraure and local construction company, Sansiri.

For more information, visit www.doonyapol.com



ABOVE
Doonyapol is known for his Nude chairs.

NEXT
Bloxx is one of many outdoor furnitures designed by Doonyapol.

KENNETH COBONPUE





LEFT
Le Petit Voyage Crib is made from abaca or buri, nylon and steel.

BOTTOM
The Bloom chair is made from hundreds of fine running stitches.

"THE ONE COMMON FACTOR IN ALL OF MY PIECES IS PRIMARILY HANDMADE."

A full-time designer, Kenneth Cobonpue, a Filipino, runs a furniture factory his mother, Betty Cobonpue, established. An interior designer, she is famous for creating new techniques using rattan to make furniture.

"My mother taught me to be creative and resourceful in anything that I do. Today, my hands are my tools in making my artwork and they are my means of expressing my thoughts and ideas," he says. He studied industrial design in New York in the 1990's and worked in Italy and Germany before heading back to Cebu, Philippines. Here, he discovered his own aesthetic, designing modern organic pieces, all handmade and natural. He is deeply inspired by some designers who do extraordinary work such as Marcel Wanders and Ross Lovegrove, who are his friends. "I admire Ingo Maurer for his lighting, Issey Miyake for his work with fabric, Santigo Calatrava and Shigeru Ban for architecture and Giacometti for his art."

Kenneth strongly believes that design is a living process forever transforming in response to the changing world. He believes sticking to a winning formula, while safe, can only kill creativity and innovation. He describes an industrial designer as half-engineer and half-artist. "For me, functionality is always a primary goal. At the end of the day, I am creating a product, not purely a piece of art," he says. His design triumphs, which are unique and difficult to replicate, includes the fabric manipulation of Bloom, a chair which takes the form of a blooming flower, and the sculptural grace of the Wave Table.

For the past decade, rattan has been his main material due to its availability, sustainability and its combination of strength and malleable nature. Apart from rattan, abaca (a banana species), bamboo, buri palm and wood now provide unique challenges and benefits. He uses leather and well as fabric these days and experiment with different weaves and patterns. His artistic inclinations have also evolved into hand-painting furniture.

Currently, he has ventured into commercial transportation and interior design. He designed the luxury eco-tricycle, the Eclipse. A modern and lavish version, it is electric, lightweight and environmentally friendly using green production techniques and materials. The designer has dreams to create a design school focusing on the artistry craft and individual designs which would embrace Asian history and culture.

He was the first Filipino to have won the Design of Asia award 2005. He was also the first to have won the Asian Designer of the Year Award 2014 given by the Maison et Objet Paris organisers. TIME magazine declared him as "rattan's first virtuoso."

For more information, visit www.kennethcobonpue.com



"My mother taught me to be creative and resourceful in anything that I do. Today, my hands are my tools in making my artwork and they are my means of expressing my thoughts and ideas."

text NG YI XIANG

OCCASIONAL TABLE

During the late 17th and early 18th centuries, occasional tables referred to dining tables with expandable or drop-leaf tops that can be extended to accommodate additional guests on special events. These days, the term occasional tables are used to describe small tables like side tables and night stands. Despite their arguably negligible role in a home, thoughtfully placed occasional tables can add new life to an otherwise mundane space.





MAXALTO PATHOS SMALL TABLE

Designer Antonio Citterio envisaged the Pathos small table as a night stand but it is versatile enough to fit anywhere in the home. It features a crossed "x" frame in copper with top and shelve in different materials.

Available from Space.

ALBA SIDE TABLE

The Alba side table from BoConcept is unapologetically masculine. Its strong, angular lines and metallic quality make it a perfect addition to a modern home. Available in anthracite grey and copper.

Available from BoConcept.





THOT PEDESTAL TABLE

French designer Pierre Paulin's Thot pedestal table has recently been put into production by Ligne Roset. Like many of the late designer's pieces, the table features sensuous curves and simple lines that channel elegance and timelessness.

Available from Ligne Roset.



KARTELL TWINKLE TABLE

Make no mistake: the Twinkle table is made of plastic, not glass, nor crystal. Shallow grooves run along the single pedestal leg and spread out from the centre beneath the square table top. Designed by Tokujin Toshioka, the Twinkle table is surely a conversation-starter.

Available from Space.



PICNIC OCCASIONAL TABLE

Designer Gam Fratesi was inspired by the traditional sewing box when he designed the Picnic occasional table but it has enough storage space to store more than just sewing supplies. A black-stained ash finish gives the table an updated look while a handle eases movement.

Available from Ligne Roset.

MOOOI URBANHIKE TABLE

The Urbanhike table by Marcel Wanders features a hiking cane that symbolises Moooi's ascent to the highest peaks of quality, innovation and style. The table comes with seven colourful badges, each representing a prominent city. You can paste them onto the table to give it a personal touch.

Available from Space.



COCO ACCENT TABLE

The Coco accent table may be diminutive in size but it packs a big punch in the style department. Featuring a svelte metal frame with antique brass finish and a smoked brown glass top, this chic little table holds its own with any grouping

Available from Barbara Barry.



CLASSICON BELL TABLE

Like its name suggests, the shape of the Bell table recalls the elegant curved silhouette of a bell. Designed by Sebastian Herkner, the table consists of a metal top and a glass base, uniquely crafted via traditional methods. Its appealing reflective surfaces add a distinctive touch to your home.

Available from Space.







VALENCIA SIDE TABLE

Give your home a dash of rustic charm with the Valencia side table, whose appearance is reminiscent of a woven basket. Designed by long-time BoConcept collaborator Morten Georgsen, the table has a stained oak veneer table top with a frame composed of bonded leather.

Available from BoConcept.

DECORATING WITH OCCASIONAL TABLES

1. Occasional tables are small so they are free to migrate from one room to another, from one spot to the next, depending upon the occasion at hand.
2. Occasional tables are the perfect elements in finishing a room. Place one at the end of a sofa of next to a comfortable reading chair.
3. Bear in mind, though: proportion is key. A relatively tall and large occasional table will go well with a sturdy leather sofa while a small, chic one will fit perfectly with a slim chaise longue.
4. Don't put functionality to the backseat. An occasional table should be sufficiently large to accommodate items like a lamp, books and a drink.
5. They shouldn't be too big, though. A night stand, for instance, should just be big enough for a reading lamp and your mobile phone.
6. Some occasional tables come with storage compartments for books or remote controllers.
7. The wonderful thing about occasional tables is that you can mix them up easily. Get a few with different styles and move them around the house once in a blue moon. You can even combine two to make a coffee table.



ARIA NEST OF TABLES

The BoConcept Adria nest of tables is comprised of three individual pieces that can be fit together or split apart according to individual desires. Made of clear glass, they exude a minimalistic robustness while channelling a poetic tenderness with their curves.

Available from BoConcept.

text WENSHAN PANG

ASK HARVEY NORMAN

Your lifestyle conundrums answered



Harvey Norman gives you a few tips on choosing a Digital Single-Lens Reflex (DSLR) Camera according to your needs.

DEAL OF THE MONTH!

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"Digital SLR cameras provide a high level of flexibility, along with excellent results. Whether you are a professional photographer or a beginner exploring your knowledge and interest in photography, a DSLR could be a good fit for your needs!"
- Cameras Expert, Sam Wong



What are the differences between a DSLR camera and a basic compact camera? The DSLR has built-in reflex mirrors and interchangeable lenses. The reflex mirrors enable live optical viewing of better image quality due mainly to its larger image sensors. A basic camera is less accurate as it uses an electronic viewfinder (EVF) to replicate what is seen through an SLR viewfinder using electronic image from the sensor. On the other hand, a DSLR camera uses a larger image sensor which gives a better image quality and response faster as compared to an ordinary camera. The best feature is its ability to switch lenses from wide angle to fisheye and various others.

How do I choose a DSLR camera that suits me? Several DSLR models are available in the market to cater to every photographers style and interest. A person with an interest in landscape and seascape photography should opt for a decent wide angle interchangeable lens, a good tripod, a polariser and neutral density graduated filters.

A fast camera with faster focus, superior accuracy and no shutter lag would be ideal if your interest is in action photography. For macro work, a slow camera with interchangeable and dedicated macro prime lens works best. Sports photography enthusiasts will need a fast focus camera which has the ability to click three frames per second or eight frames per second.

In contrast, a camera with less noise in low light is available for night photography and scenic shots, while portraits require a slow camera with an optical view finder that goes through a prism or mirror to get more detail and perfect framing.

On top of the above criteria, pointers are worth a mention. Beginners should look for automatic control options such as landscape mode and the camera will handle functions like exposure and white balance. DSLR for enthusiasts have features like mirror megapixels, and faster continuous shooting. Professionals meanwhile look for robustness and durability, usually with larger- than-usual batteries for longer shoots.

Can you tell me more about some of the most common lens types? The right choice of lenses makes all the difference in photography. There are six common types of lens. The ultra-wide angle lenses have a focal length of around less than 24mm. They are suitable for architecture, landscape artists and interior photography.

Wide angle lenses have focal lengths between 24mm to 35mm and are used to fit a whole subject in the frame. Normally interchangeable lenses are standard or normal with a focal range of 35-70mm. These are versatile lenses for a wide spectrum of photography. With a focal length in excess of 135mm, the telescopic lens is good for focusing on specific details or distant subjects. The super zoom lens has focal lengths from wide to telephoto and the length changes as you zoom.

Finally, macro lens with reproductive ratios greater than 1:1 has a focal length of 40-200 mm and is suitable for close-up photography and portraits.

Do DSLR cameras require special cleaning and care? To maintain the DSLR camera, clean with a basic cleaning kit made up of blower, brush, wet swabs and microfibres cloth. To clean the lens, use the blower to remove dust without touching the lens. Use a lens cleaner and non-abrasive, lint-free wipes. The bulb blower can be used to remove particles on the sensor. If this failed, seek professional help to prevent scratches and damage. Always keep your camera in a bag when not in use.



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COLOUR ME RIGHT

Yellow makes you feel cheerful, blue makes you feel cool, calm and collected and red raises your heart beat. Here are a few reasons why you should colour your room in these hues.

Perspectives and Colour Psychology

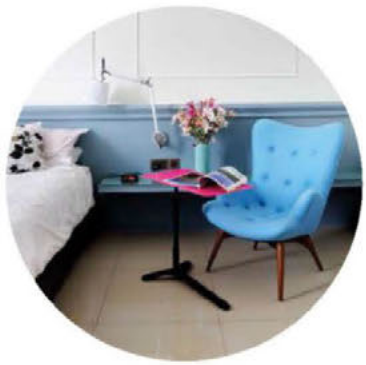
When a friend takes you on a tour around his house, a multitude of feelings gathers and switches as fast as your legs take you from room to room. Why do you feel this way? Chances are, this is due to the colours of a room. Our emotional response to primary or universal colours is conditioned by our early association with them. Take green as an example. We equate it to nature, due to its similarities to surrounding objects of the same colour.

With the play of colours, a homeowner could introduce a relaxing or stimulating mood to a room. For example, yellow makes a room feel warmer while blue makes it cooler.



photography WONG WEI LING

With the play of colours, a homeowner could introduce a relaxing or stimulating mood to a room.



photography SOO PHYE

TOP
Soft tones of blue creates an open and airy feel to a room.

BOTTOM LEFT
A beautiful colour contrast is created through when bright blue is paired with brighter colours.

BOTTOM RIGHT
A darker shade is used for the children's bedroom.

OCEAN BLUE

Blue in general, reflects a calming, peaceful, serene and tranquil quality that induces relaxation and sleep.

In general, blue deflects heat and keeps the room cool. Use softer tones of blue to create an open and airy feel. This creates the illusion of a bigger space. Moreover, the combination of light and dark shades creates a safe ambience in the kid's room, especially when they are further accessorised with night lights that cast a warm glow.

On a different shade, we didn't think we could take a risk with blue until this homeowner managed to create a beautiful colour contrast between bright blue walls and even brighter coloured home decorations. This skilful colour combination enables both elements to stand out. Unlike other colours, blue allows you to visualise the sights and sounds of the ocean to impart a peaceful atmosphere of a room.





photography JASPER YU

STANDING-OUT YELLOW

We used to have a quirky saying about yellow being a dirty fellow, but the charming warm colour has since changed our perspectives. It is a common colour used in the study room.

Yellow is the primary colour that comes to mind when bringing a pop of colour into your home. It can be used to emphasise an area or a particular object which is meant to be eye-catching. The versatility of the colour allows it to work with any colour palette placed next to it. This colour is a great way to introduce warm tones into our homes. For example, a simple decorative item can carry the colour yellow very well especially when it is placed against a backdrop in a room painted in a neutral colour like brown. Furthermore, the citrus colour gives a refreshing appeal to any part of the home and is associated with positive messages, including happiness. It is without a doubt, a fun and happy colour.



photography JASPER YU

It can be used to emphasise an area or a particular object which is meant to be eye-catching. The versatility of the colour allows it to work with any colour palette placed next to it.



photography JASPER YU



photography WONG WEI LING

ABOVE
Use yellow to emphasise an area which is meant to catch your eye.

BOTTOM LEFT
A simple decoration can carry the colour very well. You don't have to splash all walls of a room to make it look good.

BOTTOM RIGHT
The citrus colour gives a refreshing appeal to the kitchen.



photography SOO PHYE

LEFT
Red dramatizes your living space in a way no other colour can.

BOTTOM
The importance of functional pieces such as the bath mat is emphasised.



photography JASPER YU

FEROCIOUS RED

It can be intimidating or intimate. Red is a risky dominant colour to add in any room. However, with the right techniques, amount and pairings, it introduces an eye-catching pop of colour in the midst of neutral ones. It is often used in bathrooms and living rooms.

With red, less is more. Limit the use of this colour to one or two in a room. Confine it to the wall or small accessories and be sure to pair it off with colours like white to reduce the effects of an increased heart rate and alertness induced by red.

Red dramatises your living space in a way no other colour can. Its bold accents enhance the mood and setting of a room. For example, it creates an intimate setting when used in the living room, but it also whets your appetite in the dining area. This colour requires skill to pull off. It is able to increase the depth when painted at the far end of the room or a smaller one if painted on both side walls.

General ways to neutralise bright colours

Avoid the use of mirrors in a room painted in a bright colour. They reflect light and bounce the glare around the room. Also, do not forget to tone it down a notch by using pastel coloured accessories such as pink to soften the intensity of bright hues.

General ways to inject playful tones and colours into a room

Throw cushions are perfect examples. Experiment and play around with cushions of varied patterns and motifs. Bear in mind that they are not permanent features and can be changed from time-to-time. Take a step further by decorating your bright coloured room with vibrant accessories. For example, a simple red painting stands out although hung on a bright turquoise wall.

text NG YI XIANG

LIGHTWEIGHT CHAMPION

Toshiba's New Torneo Vacuum Cleaner is lightweight and a great performer. We took it for a test run, and the result is great!



The dust cup is designed for easy cleaning.

Did you know this is the first time Toshiba is launching a vacuum cleaner in Malaysia? And what a grand entrance indeed, with the Toshiba Torneo Vacuum Cleaner with a Dual Tornado System.

It is amazingly lightweight and cleans really, thanks to a breakthrough Dual Tornado System and revolutionary ultra-hygienic Futon Brush. There are no dust bags to clean; all you have to do is empty the dust cup once you're done.

SUSTAINABLE SUCTION
The Dual Tornado System works by employing a two-step system- firstly, high-speed centrifuging generates high-speed spiral power that separates the heavier dust from the air, and in so doing, prevents blockage to keep suction strong and long lasting. Secondly, low-speed centrifuging generates a low speed spiral power spin to compress the dust into the dust cup.

DOUBLE DUTY
The vacuum works just as well on the carpet as it does on a hardwood floor, so it's really handy.

MIKE SAW,
Marketing Director of
The Jekyll & Hyde Project.

This creative soul has always had an affinity for all things Japanese. After all, his company carries many premium Japanese brands that are renowned the world over. He loves the colour choice of the Torneo Vacuum Cleaners.

"I think the colours are absolutely stunning! The red and the light blue really appeal to me. The small body is really handy too. Generally Japanese products are so well designed and thought of. Not only are they aesthetically attractive, but they are well made. This really has a lot to do with their culture and discipline that make them want to create and always do their best in everything. It's a principle that I really respect and hope to adapt," he says.

Another feature he loves is the Futon Brush, which allows him to clean his sofas and mattresses so easily. "I think it's a great idea that it comes with a part that is dedicated to cleaning these things without fear of mixing together the dirty parts that we use for vacuuming the floor and carpets. It's a housewife's dream come true, and mine!" he says.

He has actually tried quite a few vacuum cleaners in his time! "I may not be the most hard working cleaner in the world, but when I start to clean, I really clean and I'm the type who likes to clean my own room including scrubbing floors. So I would say that a lightweight cleaner is very important because I sometimes hold the body when I'm trying to reach certain areas that are high, especially the top of window frames. A relatively powerful suction does it for me. I don't like things to get accidentally stuck especially when cleaning fabric, so this futon brush is perfect for the job. And the best feature I always go for are the bagless vacuum cleaners.



TOSHIBA
Leading Innovation

SHERA RAZI, Businesswoman



The vacuum is lightweight for ease of use.

This enterprising lady is always on the go, and loves anything practical that allows her to save precious time and keep her home dust-free.

"I'm allergic to dust and I have asthma. This vacuum is great because it is so light, and allows me to get to the tricky corners that you normally can't reach," she says.

She loves the futon brush as her bedroom is her sanctuary.

"I put my pillows out in the hot sun to dry and clean them, but there's always a small voice inside me that says it's not enough. This futon brush is a godsend, as I can now really get rid of the dust on my bed and my beddings!"

"The design of the vaccum really appeals to me, especially the striking colours. The body is sleek and minimalistic, perfect for my home. It allows me to clean between sofas and under beds without turning the house upside down!" she says.





FUTON MAGIC
In addition, a specially-designed Futon Brush with 16 times beat by four flexible sticks per one rotation of wheel effectively removes dust mites on the bed, mattress or sofa and removes even minute particles of dust to ensure the highest levels of hygiene for your family.



VC-GC33BSA



VC-GC32BSA

JENNETA IBRAHIM, Lecturer



The futon brush is easily attached.

With four kids in the house, cleanliness is of utmost importance to Jenneta. Juggling full time work and the schedule of four growing children means Jenneta needs to be efficient with her time.

"The Toshiba Torneo Vacuum Cleaner is great because it cleans so well so quickly. I like that I am able to adjust the suction power on the handle of the vacuum cleaner itself, rather than on the body of the vacuum cleaner (through the convenient LED Light Interlocking Hand Switch of the VC-GC33BSA model)," she says.

She loves using the futon brush on the kids' mattresses and beddings, as she now knows they're completely clean from dust and dust mites.

"It's quite amazing to see the amount of dust accumulated at each cleaning. I shudder to think that without this vacuum, all that dust would remain in the mattresses for years!" she says.

Jenneta also loves the colours and lightweight design. "Finally, a vacuum cleaner that is stylish and elegant!"



LIGHTWEIGHT
The Toshiba's Torneo vacuum cleaner is a mere 2.7kg (VC-GC32BSA model) or 2.8kg (VC-GC33BSA model), for easy lifting and easy carrying. Its compact size means ease of use in small rooms or apartments, especially since it also features hidden wheels for greater mobility.

Two models are available-VC-GC33BSA which comes in two attractive colours i.e. *Pink Gold* or *Gran Red*, and VC-GC32BSA which comes in *Silky Pink* and *Light Blue*. Check it out and discover how it will make light work of all your vacuuming chores. For more information, call customer enquiries at **1 300 88 7899**.

BUBBLES OF JOY

In the final instalment of our wine series, David Stephan of Wine Talk tells us why Champagnes are associated with celebrations. In addition, he tells us that you don't have to pair white wine with fish and red wine with steaks.

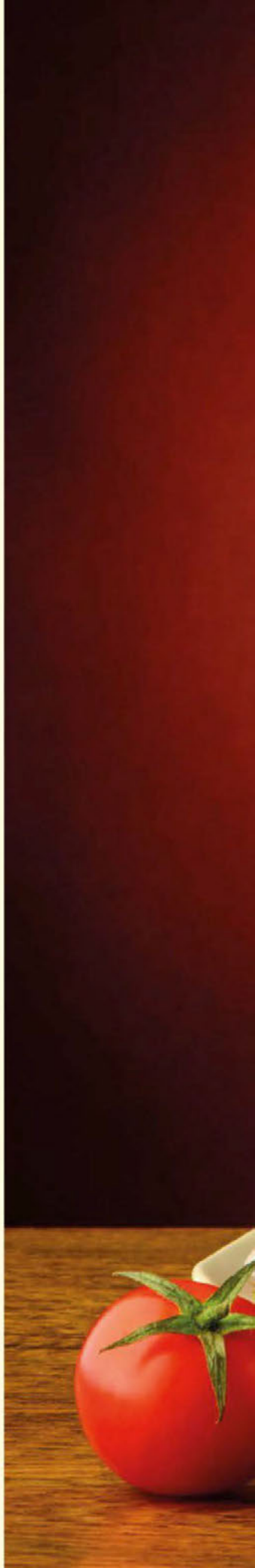
Champagne is often associated with celebrations. Why is that so? Champagne has been associated with celebrations for centuries. During the 16th and 17th centuries, Champagne became popular and its consumption was reserved for the elites such as French aristocrats, members of the British monarchy and the Russian Tsars (Cristal Roederer was created for Alexander II of Russia), where it was served at lavish dinners and parties.

One of the most recognised aspects of Champagne comes from its uncorking, which often brings jubilant exclamations. Since then, champagnes and its delicate bubbles have been associated with celebrations of all sorts, from small family reunions to large scale events (Formula One winners have celebrating their victories with Champagne since the 1950s).

The French have Champagne, the Italians Prosecco and the Australians, simply, sparkling wine. What are their differences? Champagne is a sparkling wine that is made using a specific technique from a specific region in France, namely Champagne, about 160km North-East of Paris. There are a few methods to make sparkling wines, all of which will have different impact on the wine – and the price.

Sparkling wines labelled "Champagne" have to be made using the traditional method only. Other French wines made using the same method but originating from regions outside of Champagne are known as Crémant (de Loire, d'Alsace, de Bourgogne…). Cavas, Spain's most popular sparkling wine is made using the same method but its ageing period is shorter than that of Champagnes. Prosecco is a classic Italian sparkling wine, but depending on the appellation, some may be made using traditional methods (Conegliano or Valdobbiadene), but many are made in tanks. For other sparkling wines, it depends on the winery, but the traditional method of making sparkling wine is the most costly, a point that will affect the retail price of the product.

What wines will you be serving to your guests this holiday season? What dishes are you serving? Christmas has always been an important time of celebration with my family as it's a good chance for us to gather and have a good time and good food – whenever I make my way back to France, that is. We French sure do enjoy lengthy celebration meals, our lunches and dinners can go on for as long as four to six hours! Of course there will be plenty of food to keep us going. We always start with an apéritif, such as Champagne or Crémant – perfect to open the appetite, and enjoy the drinks with some light bites.





For other sparkling wines, it depends on the winery, but the traditional method of making sparkling wine is the most costly, a point that will affect the retail price of the product.

A sweet wine that matches the colour of the dessert is usually a good pair or we can go back to having Champagne.

SPARKLING WINE PRODUCTION METHODS

MÉTHODE CHAMPENOISE* OR *MÉTHODE TRADITIONELLE

"This is the traditional method used in Champagne, and other wines using it across the world may use that name in their labesl. With this technique, a still wine is made and transferred to a bottle along with sugar and yeasts. A second fermentation will occur within the closed bottle where the yeast consumes the sugar, creating natural bubbles. This method takes time as Champagne usually requires a minimum of 15 months in a cold cellar that's dug underground-with Premium Cuvées resting for many years."

***MÉTHODE "CHARMAT"* (OR TANK FERMENTATION)**

"This method uses the same principle of the second fermentation in a closed environment but it occurs in large tanks and not within the bottle. Using this method, yeast flavours can be added to the wine and the cost of production would be much lower."

CARBONATION

"Carbon dioxide is added into regular wine – used for the production of cheaper sparkling wines."





As I come from a fishing village, having seafood is a must – oysters, especially! It simply isn't Christmas without oysters! For that, we have a light and crisp white wine like Chablis, Sancerre or White Bordeaux. Following that, we will have foie gras, another Christmas staple. This is usually matched with a sweet wine like a Sauternes or Ste Croix Du Mont. I know it sounds bizarre to have a sweet wine in the middle of a meal, but that's the way it goes. The next dish that follows is usually a fish (or a lobster like we had last year). This matches well with a rich white wine like a Burgundy or white Cotes Du Rhone.

Once that course is done, we'll be well and ready for some meats. Roast beef or venison is another classic with my family (my dad is a hunter). At home, we'll serve a beautiful Bordeaux with that but I also love Cotes du Rhone or Languedoc reds with it, which we keep along for the cheese platter that follows! I know, it seems like a lot of food; this is why we take our time and have seriously lengthy meals.

Finally, if we're in the mood (and have the space) for dessert, there will be something light. My brother is a pastry chef so you can trust that it will be something delicious. A sweet wine that matches the colour of the dessert is usually a good pair or we can go back to having Champagne.

Is it comme il faut to pair red wines with red meats and white wines with white meats/ seafood? Well, that's the traditional way to pair food with wine but I don't believe it has to be observed strictly. Food and wine pairing is important to the people consuming it so

A little bit of spiciness is fine, but very hot dishes will "kill" the flavours of the wine you pair the dish with.

I focus to the people first. Pairing isn't only about a certain wine pairing well with a certain dish. I like to see what types of wine someone likes before recommending a wine to be paired with his meal.

For example, white wine pairs well with fish, but what if you don't like white wine? Then it would be best to go with a lighter red, like a Pinot Noir, Gamay or a young Rhone blend. The same applies for meats as well. You don't necessarily have to stick with red wines when enjoying red meats. Personally, I love enjoying poultry dishes with a rich Chardonnay or a Rhone Blend.



What are the wines that pair well with Malaysian/ Asian food that's known for its rich spices and heat? Malaysian food – and Asian food in general – have a common enemy to wine: chillies! A little bit of spiciness is fine, but very hot dishes will "kill" the flavours of the wine you pair the dish with. A classic pairing which I love matching with Asian cuisines are dry wines, like the German Riesling, for example. It's a perfect match with classic Asian food that has a bit of spice and a mix of sweet and sour flavours. As an alternative, try Chenin Blanc, from France or South Africa, or even Pinot Gris, which go great with mushroom dishes.

For reds, I think dry wines like Cabernet Sauvignon and Malbec can be a bit sharp with local food – I prefer fruity reds, like Pinot Noir for the lighter ones, all the way to Shiraz or Merlot, which are juicier and more fruit forward, to go along with richer dishes like beef rendang!

HOW TO OPEN A BOTTLE OF CHAMPAGNE WITHOUT SPILLING ITS CONTENT

Opening a bottle of sparkling can be a scary thing – especially Champagne bottles, which are heavier and have more pressure. David has a few tips.

- Make sure the bottle is cold as it "numbs" the bubbles
- Incline the bottle and hold it at an angle of 45 degrees
- Remove the cap and cage while keeping your thumb on the cork with your hand around the neck
- Keep the cage around the cork – this helps with the grip
- Squeeze the cage tightly for a few seconds and move it from left to right without pulling it
- When you feel the pressure working up, keep turning the cork while maintaining your grip. Let the pressure make its way up
- Finally, remove the cork and there won't be any noise (or a big mess!)



WHO IS DAVID STEPHAN?

Before moving to Malaysia, David Stephan worked in various hotels and restaurants in France, the Caribbean and China. He is currently the sommelier of www.winetalk.com.my, an online wine store.

text WENSHAN PANG portrait photography DANIEL LAI other photos WINE TALK

THE INVISIBLE TOUCH

Japanese design firm Super Potato's work have won it high-profile projects all over the world. Not bad for design that vice-president Norihiko Shinya says is "almost invisible".



The popular Straits Kitchen buffet restaurant at the Grand Hyatt Singapore might serve up a spread of local delights cooked a la minute, but it was actually a concept mooted by Japanese design firm Super Potato a decade ago. "We proposed for the space to have an ambience like a food court, but nicer, and people would be able to try different types of cuisine," says Super Potato vice-president Norihiko Shinya. The 51-year-old was in town for jury duties for the President Design Awards 2014.

A sophisticated, artfully lit space dressed in natural materials such as wood, glass and metal, the winning design of Straits Kitchen and Mezza9, which Shinya also designed, was the firm's calling card to the rest of Asia, at a time when most of its projects were still in Japan. The project also marked

1 It might have been designed in 2004, but the Japanese-influenced design of Mezza9 at the Grand Hyatt Singapore still looks current today.

2 Norihiko Shinya was in town recently as a judge for the President's Design Awards 2014.

3 Designed by Shinya, the new Grand Salon at the Grand Hyatt Singapore features a show kitchen for live cooking action.

4 Part of the Grand Hyatt's redesigned event space, the Loft Kitchen can be used for communal coffee breaks where chefs whip up light meals on the spot.







a collaboration with the Grand Hyatt here that continues till today. Shinya wrapped the refurbishment of the hotel's function rooms (called Salons) this March, and is now working on the revamp of their grand ballroom.

Since Straits Kitchen, Shinya has also put the Super Potato stamp on the showflat for Orchard Scotts, the common areas of Boulevard Vue, and Oasia Hotel in Novena, all for Far East Organisation. The company's illustrious resume also includes international projects for the Hyatt, Westin, Shangri-La Hotel and Ritz Carlton.

What is it about its design that has won Super Potato so many plaudits? Shinya explains its art of "invisible design" and more.

ON DESIGNING

Shinya attributes his 27-year tenure at Super Potato to the simple fact that he loves his job.

He joined the firm straight out of university, armed with a first-class degree in architecture. "When I graduated, architects were designing interiors for commercial establishments such as cafes. The economy was booming and interior design, too, and commercial design was then more innovative and artistic than architecture. So I chose to do interiors," he explains. At the time, it also suited his preference for projects that could be completed quickly, unlike buildings.

"Most of our projects are hotels and restaurants, or bars and shops. For some projects, like Mezza9 and Straits Kitchen, we had to combine operational and design concepts, where design has to follow function, so we had to work closely with the operator. We travel a lot and like to experience the local culture of these places, so we can offer suggestions to the client," says Shinya.

One winning suggestion was to turn the then conventional fine dining restaurants and coffee house of the Grand Hyatt into the dining concepts of Mezza9 and the Straits Kitchen, respectively. The ideas were a hit.

As for difficult clients, Shinya says: "Clients are always difficult (laughs), but we try to explain how the concept is important to the project. We try to communicate closely, that's the only way."

ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EASTERN AND WESTERN DESIGN

Although it now has projects all over the world, Super Potato's work is still identifiably "Asian".

"When I was studying, European or Western design was mainstream, but now that the world is globalised due to the Internet, the Asian look is becoming popular, especially in China. Clients want an original Asian touch and feel," he explains.

Shinya elaborates that the strategies for Asian and Western design are very different. The Western style emphasises symmetry in design, as seen in a church or chapel; and the lines are very straight. Asian design, on the other hand, is more natural and not as symmetrical.

"The thinking process is different as well. The Asian approach is not something I can easily explain (laughs), but while Western design is still traditional, the Asian style doesn't follow a fixed look; it's still morphing, and it's also a softer approach. The difference is almost like that of hardware and software," he muses.

With the slowdown in Western economies and the rise of Asian ones, Shinya notes that American designers have also started to come to Asia and "learn the

THE STORY BEHIND THE NAME

The firm was founded in 1973 by current president Takashi Sugimoto, and was initally called Potato Design Studio as Potato was Sugimoto's nickname. "When I joined the company and it was growing, we became Super Potato," recalls Shinya, who became vice-president in 2006.

Asian style of design".

ON THE SUPER POTATO STYLE

"We have a style, but it's not very iconic. For international hotels especially, we have to balance Western and Asian styles, and can't do something very Japanese," says Shinya.

That said, the Japanese approach, which is rooted in the country's history and culture, is inherent in all of Super Potato's work. At a design forum later that Shinya participated in, he introduces the history of tea master Rikyu (1522 - 1591), whose Zen-style version of a tea ceremony was revolutionary in its directness, honesty, and celebration of the beauty of simple things. "The Japanese love simplicity as it enhances the beauty of the item itself," explains Shinya.

"The meaning of the item is the most important aspect, not the shape, colour or surface, or that it looks like a Super Potato design – that would be meaningless. Usually, people would see the finished product and be inspired, but we concentrate on something behind the design – it's almost invisible," he explains.

Master Rikyu's iconic tea ceremony room of 1582 was also innovative in its use of recycled materials. Besides being partial to natural materials such as stone, timber and metal, Super Potato embraces the use of recycled materials, for both their sustainability as well as aesthetics.


5

"We've used an artistic approach to design from the beginning, and its quite common for artists to use old materials that have a memory and history behind them. We are creating with all the memories that remain in these materials," he says.

Straits Kitchen, for example, uses old ship pumps for planters, and adorns its walls with an assortment of recycled materials from the scrapyard.

ON THE BEST HOSPITALITY EXPERIENCES

Having worked extensively on hotel and restaurant projects over the past 20-odd years, Shinya has wined, dined and stayed at the best of them. But what he says is his best experience surprises us. "There are many good hotels and restaurants but, as a designer, I'm always checking for some defect, and cannot relax. I find local inns more comfortable. For example, when my wife and I go to Bali, we stay in a small local hotel. In Kyushu, we visit onsen town Yufuin, where the hospitable local inns are very relaxed, natural and comfortable."

It's the same with food. "I like local street food. When we're in Singapore, we don't go to hotel restaurants. We go to the hawker centre," says Shinya, referring to himself and his Singaporean wife. His favourite food here is ba kut teh, and chicken rice from a small, very old and somewhat dirty coffeeshop in Jalan Besar, but "we like the place", he declares.

Shinya says that to design for the people of a certain country, you have to understand their identity, and the best way is through their food. Shinya could see the multi-cultural elements in our food, and that gave rise to the suggestion of a local food buffet at the Straits Kitchen, as the brief from the Grand Hyatt at that time was to come up with a concept that would be uniquely Singaporean.

ON HIS FUTURE PLANS

"My dream is to own, design and operate my own small boutique hotel. I want to experience what it's like to be the owner and to be able to decide on everything. I would want it to offer Japanese-style hospitality, but not be fully Japanese either. That would be the biggest project of my life."

Find out about Super Potato's other projects at www.superpotato.jp.


6

5 Just one of the many Hyatt establishments Super Potato has designed over the years, this is the Salon area of the Park Hyatt Busan in South Korea, completed in 2013.

6 The design firm created refined dining aesthetics for the massive Bacchanal Buffet in Caesars Palace, Las Vegas, in 2012.

text REBECKKA WONG photos SUPER POTATO & GRAND HYATT SINGAPORE

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Sold
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HOME RENO

Turning a tiny two-room flat into an artsy space-saving bachelor pad



The sole bedroom in this home was opened up to serve as a light-filled living room instead.



ALL IN ONE

This tiny apartment is packed with surprises and space-saving ideas.

WHO
A design lecturer in his 40s

HOME
A two-room flat

SIZE
460sqf



LEFT
Thanks to the foyer's sliding glass shutter panels, the dining area can now be hidden from the common corridor – but it still enjoys the natural light that streams in from the corridor's windows.

Larry Seow, who lectures at Nanyang Polytechnic's School of Design in Singapore, has lived in this one-bedroom apartment all his life.

But when he finally got the place all to himself, Larry – who specialises in interior design – decided to apply his design know-how to the flat by transforming it into a space-efficient bachelor pad.

"I grew up in this small space with four other family members. It was always cluttered, and we did everything on the floor as we didn't even have a dining table," he recalls. "So, for the renovation, I wanted to have a tabletop to craft my collages on, more privacy for this common corridor unit, and storage space."

In order to fit in as much storage space as possible, he turned the majority of the floor area into a storage platform. While many would have been bothered by the lowered ceiling height, Larry saw it as a bonus.

"It brings me closer to the ceiling, and the space feels more intimate. The design of this home was planned according to how I use the space, and everything is actually proportionate to my body," he elaborates.

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By Acacia.


Repertoire
Japanese Style

As this home is just for one, Larry took the liberty of hacking away most of the walls, including those of the sole bedroom.

A living room now takes its place, filled with his paintings, books, and a daybed sofa. Larry says that as he grew up sleeping on mattresses on the floor (and still does now), the lack of a bedroom wasn't such a bizarre idea to him.

The former living room by the main entrance now serves as a dining area with a kitchenette. Larry allocated some of its floor area to a handy foyer by the main door. "This extra space allows me to put my groceries down, sit on the steps, and remove my shoes, which are stored in the foyer as well," he shares.

Sliding glass louver panels divide the dining area from the foyer, creating more privacy for the home even when the main door is open.

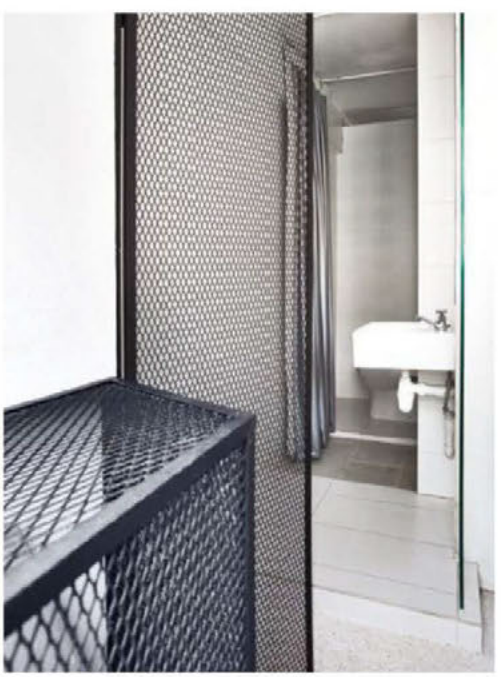
While Larry designed his home to fit like a glove, as a design practitioner, he takes delight in observing how other people use the space.

"I thought it was interesting to see how a friend used the low beam in the living room to rest his raised arms while watching TV," he notes. He also observed how a friend's daughters instinctively sat on the steps of the utility room to chit-chat.

Thanks to his years of experience in designing spaces, Larry successfully restyled his shoebox flat into a home that not only offers much more storage than meets the eye, but is also personalised down to each square foot.

While Larry designed his home to fit like a glove, as a design practitioner, he takes delight in observing how other people use the space.



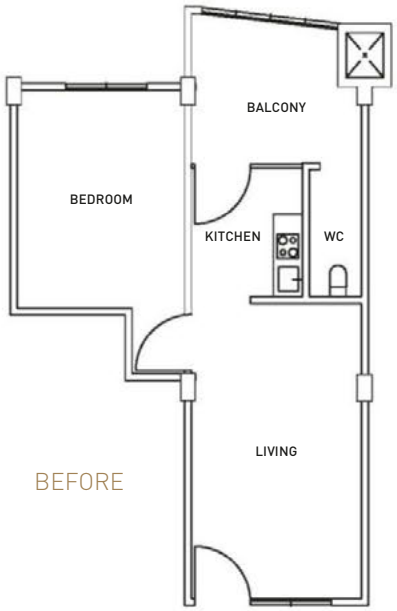


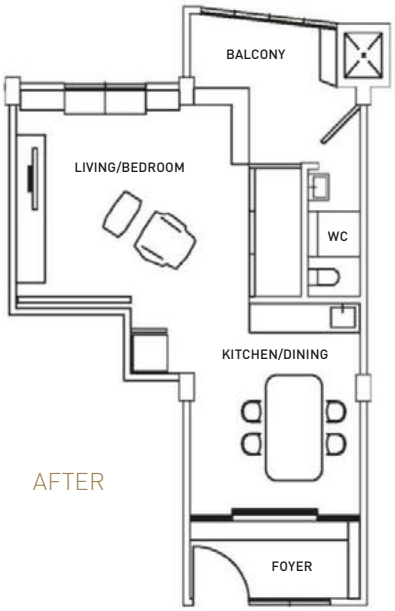
LEFT
Larry customised a deep U-shaped bookshelf that doubles as a cosy reading nook around the living room's window. The wheeled wooden consoles allow flexibility, which is crucial for small spaces.

RIGHT
Instead of allocating precious floor space to storage compartments, Larry created a platform that serves as a "store floor" to keep his possessions hidden.

FAR RIGHT
Swinging panels made of steel mesh were devised to partially conceal the rubbish chute and appliances in the utility area.

FLOOR PLAN









LEFT
The dry kitchen's countertop and backsplash are made of granite slabs; the unpolished edges add a simple yet interesting accent to the space.

FAR LEFT
The main door opens up into a narrow but cosy foyer. Larry usually sits on the steps to take off his shoes before heading into the common area.

text MAVIS ANG photography DARREN CHANG art direction YEW XIN YI AND LIM YI LING

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HOME RENO

Turning a three-room flat into a fluid and versatile space





LEFT
The bedroom next to the common corridor was transformed into an open living room.

SPACE ALTERATIONS

This home's renovation makes the best of a typical old flat layout and turned it into an open, yet flexible, space.

WHO
A doctor in his early 40s

HOME
A three-room flat

SIZE
680sqf

When Lim Meng Chuan met ID Emboss interior designer Alex Chang, he brought up the idea of concrete screed floors for his resale apartment. "People don't realise that concrete floors can feel powdery, and often result in crack lines," Alex reveals.

After some education, the homeowner heeded Alex's advice and went with concrete-look homogenous tiles instead, and gave him the freedom to design the rest of the flat. "I wanted a clean, spacious design, without the walls," Meng Chuan shares.

After an overhaul that took slightly over two months, this once small and dingy space is now a sleek dwelling for the modern man – thanks to Alex's redesign, which followed three evergreen concepts pertinent to small spaces.

1 Knock them all down

The first order of the day was to remove as many walls as possible. By opening up the kitchen and bedrooms, visitors are now greeted with a view of the entire home at the door.

For Meng Chuan, it was paramount that the private areas of the home be made bigger than in the original layout. Now, the home is one fluid space, with natural light touching all corners.

The homeowner also decided not to install a false ceiling to conceal the electrical trunking as he didn't want to further compromise on ceiling height.

2 Keep your options open

With its walls pulled down, one of the former bedrooms is now a cosy living room. The floor-to-ceiling cabinets that run along one of its walls flow into the adjoining open-concept bedroom, which now merges seamlessly with the living area.











Every corner was kept to a walnut, black, grey and white palette that pulls this single-space apartment together.

OPPOSITE
Previously accessed by a small entrance, the wall that separated the kitchen from the common area was removed to create more space.

LEFT
The clean-cut kitchen features a countertop made with environmentally friendly wood-look Kompaktplus.

ABOVE, LEFT
This locally designed Jotter Goods glass display cabinet works as a mini bar.

ABOVE
Meng Chuan fitted a snug study area into the former utility space with the help of a bar-height table that is aligned with the windows.



The wall between both bedrooms was removed to create a private space that's double in size.

With the help of the living room's blackout curtains, bi-fold dividers, sofa bed and height-adjustable coffee table, the space can be transformed into a simple guestroom.

The door to Meng Chuan's bedroom has also been replaced with a glass one, which helps to contain the air-conditioning, and also maintains the room's openness.

3 Same same, but different

A consistent look is essential in pulling off a professional look for an open-plan space, so Alex and Meng Chuan kept the finishes and furniture pieces to a palette of greys, walnut and black.

For example, Alex chose the same wood-look laminate series for all nine doors of the built-in wardrobe, but varied the tempo by using three different shades.

"Everything is kept to a matte look," the designer says. "This includes the tiles, which were used throughout the whole house, including the bathroom."

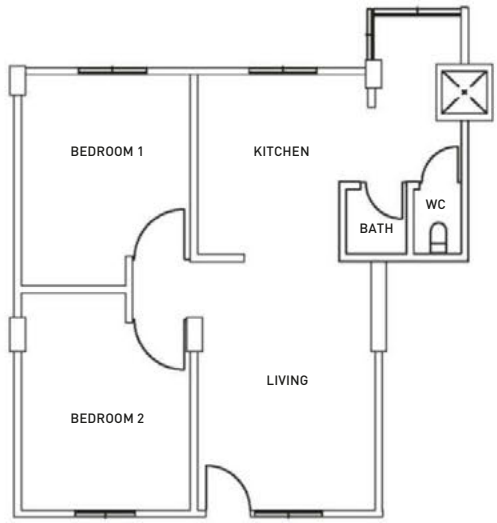
Most of the furniture was hand-picked by Meng Chuan, and his keen sense of design is manifested in the form of vintage-inspired designs found peppered around the house. These include a Mid-Century modern dining set and an old-school glass display cabinet from Jotter Goods at Star Living, a vintage-looking Marshall speaker and a record player.

Sharp, suave and sensible, Meng Chuan's refurbished home has all the right ingredients for a good-looking, yet functional, man cave.

BELOW, LEFT
The former bedroom's walls were replaced with curtains and bi-fold doors so that the area can still be used as a private room.

BELOW, RIGHT
An inviting vignette made up of Meng Chuan's retro-inspired gadgets is set up by the main entrance.

FLOOR PLAN



BEFORE



AFTER





HOME RENO

Stripping a jumbo HDB flat to its bare basics



OPEN HOUSE

This huge space – a three-room and a four-room flat combined, was made to look even larger by sticking to a minimalistic design.

WHO
A couple in their late 20s and early 30s

HOME
A jumbo unit made up of a three-room and four-room flat

SIZE
1,765sqf



Just like the supersized kitchen island, the dining set had to be bulky in appearance so as to remain proportionate to the expansive dining area.









ABOVE
By tearing down the walls of two bedrooms, a study and the kitchen, the common area now occupies a large unobstructed space that's rarely seen in HDB flats.

LEFT
The common toilet can be accessed from the kitchen, and it echoes the home's light wood and white theme.

FAR LEFT
The oversized kitchen island eradicates the need for conventional cabinets as it's spacious enough to hold all of the couple's crockery.

OPPOSITE, TOP
The couple went with a single exposed bulb for the dining area as it creates less visual distraction for the minimal space.

OPPOSITE, BELOW
A large island was essential to anchor the wide kitchen area, which was where the former kitchen and a bedroom used to be.



Daryl Ong and Kate Low knew that they'd chanced upon a real gem when they first laid eyes on this roomy apartment, which is a merger of a corner four-room apartment and its adjoining three-room unit. "We viewed it on Saturday, and signed the papers on Tuesday," Daryl quips.

The couple saw the potential in transforming this 22-year-old flat – which the previous occupants had already amalgamated – into the open-plan, minimalistic space that they had always envisioned their home to be, and felt that they didn't need to look any further.

There was also no hesitation when it came to picking a designer who could realise their vision; that was already decided two years ago when they stumbled upon Desmond Ong's home on a design website. "When we met, the three of us didn't need to discuss much either, because all our ideas were aligned," Daryl recalls. "The home was going to have white walls, clean lines and an open layout."

Almost all the walls were brought down during the six-month renovation, and the original five-bedroom flat is now a massive singular space.

The only doors within this gallery-like home belong to the washrooms, and even the sleeping area is left open – which Desmond thought was rather daring. It definitely helps that the couple are used to sleeping without air conditioning as ▸





LEFT
Daryl and Kate furnished their living room with unfussy designs from Ikea and Ethnicraft.

BOTTOM, LEFT
A personalised steel mesh gate that integrates the unit number into its design sets the tone for the distinctive home.

BOTTOM, RIGHT
This bookshelf acts as a divider between the living room and a nook by the entrance.





Even though there was enough room to house more furniture pieces, the couple deliberately left much of home undecorated as they wanted to showcase the large space as it is.

well. "It's funny, because when friends come over and ask for a house tour, I simply tell them to stand at the main door, because you can see everything from there!" Daryl adds with a chuckle.

As aesthetics take precedence in this household, there are only a few powerpoints installed. For instance, the water-heater switch for the master bedroom's bathroom is located in the kitchen, but the couple feels that it was a "small sacrifice" for the home to look good.

"We wanted it very clean, so we chose cove lighting over hanging cables and exposed bulbs, and didn't include any feature wall design for the living room," Kate explains. She also attributed the home's neat outline to Desmond, who is architecturally trained and has a knack for coming up with clever ways to conceal wiring.

The lightness of this minimalistic home is also heightened by the lack of bulky wardrobes. The couple live simply and don't have many belongings, which enables them to keep most of the clutter within the few customised built-in cabinets.

Despite being a marketing manager for a fashion retail company, Kate's clothes barely fill one rail. "I used to rent, and I tend to throw away a lot of things whenever I move," says Kate of her habit of living with less. ▶ The couple were also aware that

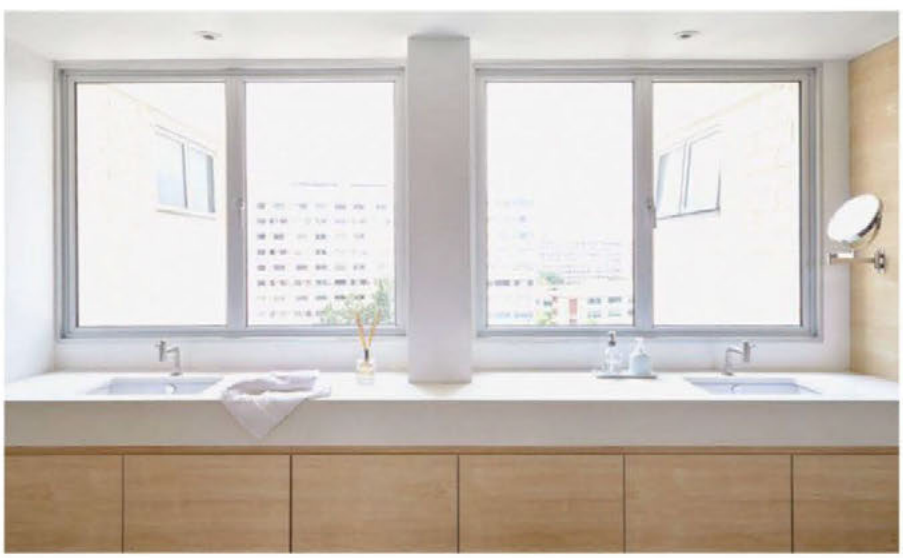


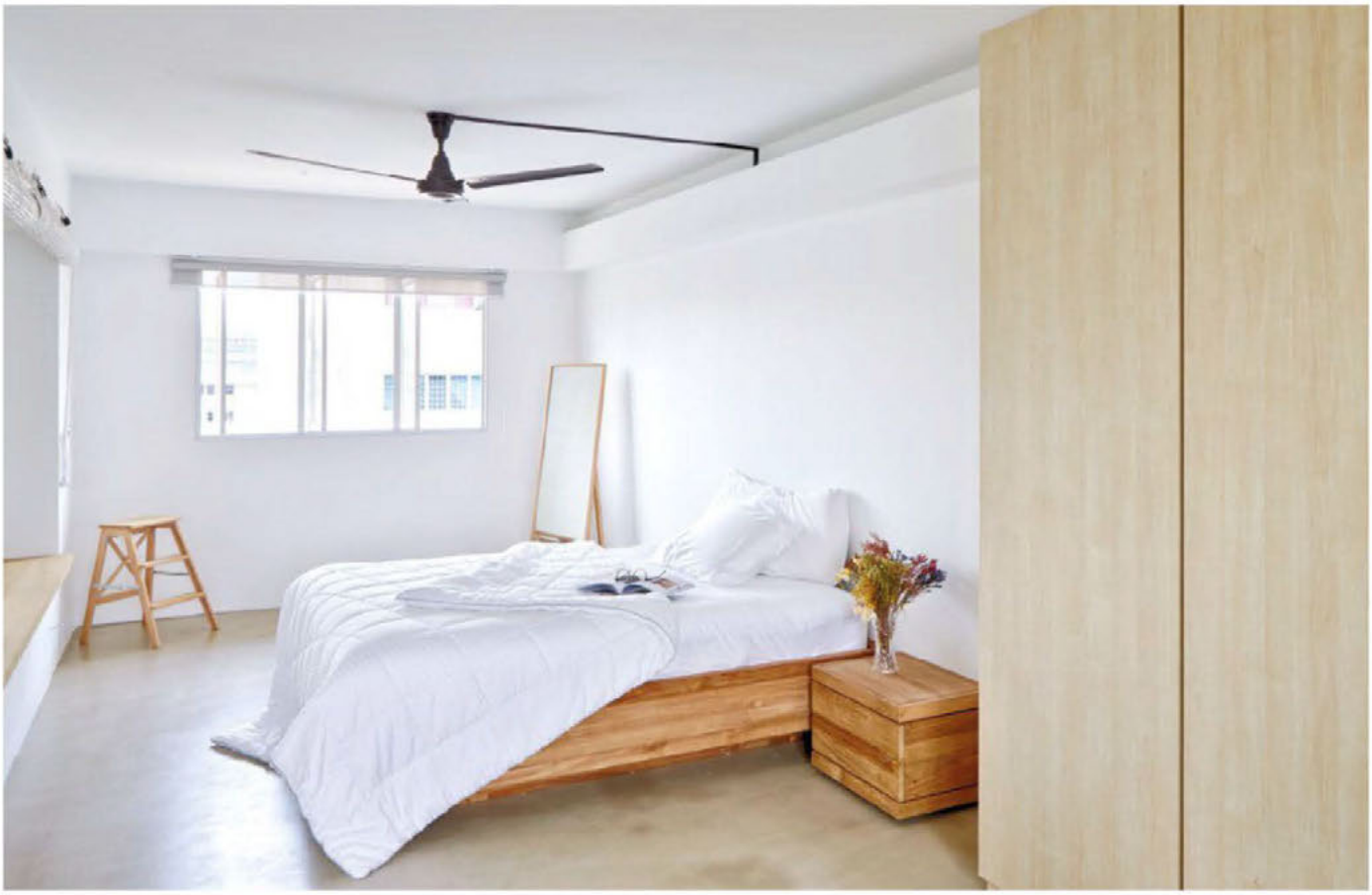
The open concept was taken to the extreme in this abode. Even the sole bedroom was left without any doors or walls to fully enclose it. The closest thing to privacy for the room is achieved with bamboo blinds.

because their home was a fully open-concept space, it had to have one strong consistent look.

So, they went furniture shopping with a plan to buy most of the pieces from one shop, and got the majority of it from Ethnicraft, whose clean-lined designs were aligned with the duo's penchant for simplicity.

Having such wide open spaces is truly a luxury in the context of flats, and Daryl and Kate's choice of an architectural design with minimal decorations for this space couldn't have been a better way to flaunt the extensive footprint of their home. ●



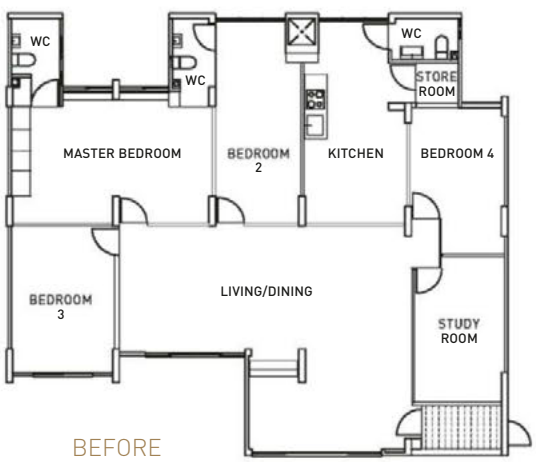


ABOVE
Most of the lighting is hidden. The ledge above the bed conceals cove lighting, which emits a warm tint that bathes the room in a soothing glow.

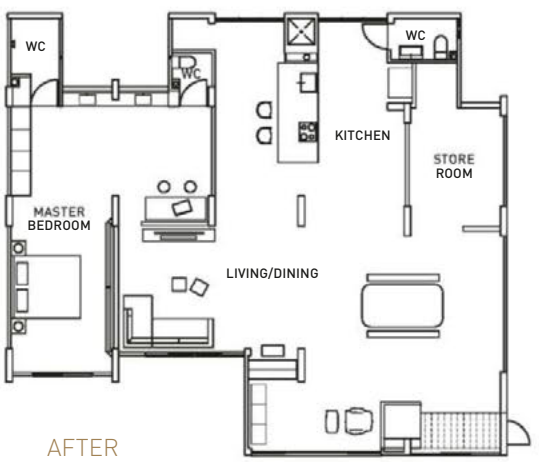
OPPOSITE, TOP
The couple rationalised that as they are usually alone at night, it didn't matter if their bed was exposed to the rest of the space.

OPPOSITE, BELOW
The double-sink vanity top near the bed is supported by deep cabinetry. By storing all of their toiletries in it, the home's uncluttered appearance is easily maintained.

FLOOR PLAN



BEFORE



AFTER





COLOUR CONCEPT

Bold and beautiful chinoiserie

MAKE A SCENE

See how a confident colourist transformed a space from dull to dazzling.

WHO
A mature couple who are business owners

HOME
A penthouse apartment

SIZE
3,300sqf

LEFT
The rich peacock blue of the family lounge has a captivating aura that energises the room, while also bringing a sense of serenity.



LEFT
The signature pattern of Missoni fabrics, used for the cushions, offers a contrast to the sinuous lines of the sofa and overall softness of the decor.

RIGHT
The same royal blue is seen again in the bedroom, but in smaller doses, as the space calls for restraint and intimacy. Small-scale patterns and tantalising textures provide visual interest.

The spanking new penthouse had high ceilings and a great view of the city, but it was just a bland shade of vanilla. The homeowners, a mature local Chinese couple, had been impressed by a Japanese ski lodge Nikki Hunt of Design Intervention had designed. They knew she was the right one to design their space.

They also wanted a blend of the best of Chinese and Japanese aesthetics with a contemporary edge. Though both styles are often thought of as one – "Oriental" design – the two actually contradict each other. Nikki explains: "Japanese interiors are tranquil spaces with natural colour palettes. Chinese interiors, on the other hand, are highly stylised. They use bright, strong colour tones to create bold, dramatic interiors."

Her unabashed use of colour is evident in her portfolio, and this apartment is no exception.

FAMILY LOUNGE

For the family lounge, Nikki was inspired by Zaha Hadid, an Iraqi-British architect hailed for distinctive futuristic curving forms in both her architecture and interior work.

The designer covered the bay window in an amorphous customised seating structure which recalls Hadid's fluid installations. Its bulk is visually reduced, thanks to the use of white solid surfacing.

Velvety seat and throw cushions in peacock blue and Chinese imperial yellow bring informality to the space, while a watery splash of the same colours on one wall (through wallpaper) plays down the strong hues.

While this room contrasts with the maximalist style of the living and dining areas, it holds its own in terms of drama and exuberance.



BEDROOM

As you progress through the apartment to the most private room – the master bedroom – the mood quietens to a hushed serenity.

Here, the ideals of harmony, balance and order are presented through plain walls, simple wood finishes and symmetry.

Nikki combined two bedrooms and two bathrooms to make one spacious master suite, with both his and hers bathrooms and walk-in wardrobes.

The main wall is treated with a Japanese post and beam design that stresses symmetry. Shoji screens, a traditional element of Japanese architecture, are used as partitions for the bathrooms and wardrobes.

Though the walls appear undressed, they are clad in a white pearlised grass cloth that accentuate daylight. The simple lines, abundant light flow and overall feeling of calmness impart a meditative atmosphere to the bedroom.





"Colour is one of the most important tools in a decorator's arsenal. It can transform any space instantly. Different colours affect people in different ways. The key is to find a hue that best creates the mood that you would like to evoke in each room."
— Nikki

DINING ROOM

The designer clad the entire dining room in a powerful fresh green chinoiserie wallpaper, representing renewal and growth. The custom-made wallpaper is sumptuous not just because it is made from silk, but also for its delicate detailing of flowers, fruit and birds.

Complementing the rich, naturalistic mural panels are plain, neutral-coloured curtains, rug and high-gloss acrylic furniture in crisp white.

Modern interpretations of Chinese fretwork are seen in the sideboard's legs and octagonal display cabinet. Hanging above the dining table is a ceiling panel that echoes the living room's octagon motif.

LEFT
The delicate tree branches of the hand-painted wallcovering circles the dining room and do not repeat, giving the effect of a mural. The two head chairs reference the orange tones in the living room, while the high-gloss furniture is reminiscent of Chinese lacquer.


THE TRAVEL BOOK



ABOVE
The mottled rug and striated wallcovering creates a cohesive look in the large living room, while its symmetry gives the room structure.

LEFT
Neutrals take on a rich, sumptuous look with glints of silver and gold. The designer's modern interpretation of quintessential Japanese and Chinese elements is elegantly subtle.



LIVING ROOM

The predominantly neutral-coloured living room is anything but boring, thanks to a masterful mix of textures and materials, and interjections of hue.

Nikki set the scene with a wall of onyx, seen upon entry from the private lift foyer, and on the surface underneath the bar counter. Other materials were chosen in line with the Japanese aesthetic, such as the stone-look wallcovering from British interiors company Fromental, sand-coloured sofa and bespoke rug. Pops of orange in the cushions reference the burnt orange of one of the couple's prized Japanese paintings.

The view from the living room is of the homeowners' Japanese garden with a pair of *ofuro*, or Japanese wooden soaking tubs. The couple had specially requested to have the tubs after seeing them in the ski lodge Nikki designed. Nikki also put up a wall between the room and the balcony, and created an octagon-shaped window, which frames a bonsai tree.

White, silver and gold were introduced to add a sense of space and light, and a touch of luxe. "The key is balance.Too much gold and the room would have lost its serene feel," she explains. ●





COLOUR CONCEPT

A vivid and happy mix of hues in materials and furnishings

BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL

This young couple weren't afraid to bring together a whirlwind of exuberant colour in their flat.

WHO
A couple in their late 20s

HOME
Four-room apartment

SIZE
1,184sqf

LEFT
A powder-blue wall and mustard seat make for a strong colour combination, but the result doesn't overwhelm as the table and artwork are kept neutral.



Colour-loving couple Tay Tze Wei and Sheaufen Tay, both 29, were clear on one thing: they didn't want a black-and-white home. "We like bright things – as bright as possible," says Sheaufen.

So, beyond the fresh, vibrant shades on their walls and furniture, the globe-trotting duo infused a kaleidoscope of cheery hues into their four-room HDB flat through homeware and artwork picked up during their travels.

"We like to buy random stuff that may not be useful. You'll find a place for it if you buy what you like," declares Tze Wei.

The plucky homeowners didn't worry for a second about pairing unlikely styles, materials or hues. "If it doesn't clash, or if it clashes in a beautiful way, then it's okay. If it doesn't work, we'll change it," he says.

Beyond requirements for a shoe cabinet, a wardrobe and a comfortably sized kitchen, the couple left most decisions to designer Jack Loh from Three-D Conceptwerke in this renovation.

Jack enlarged the footprint of the kitchen, replacing the walls with glass panels to keep in cooking fumes while allowing Tze Wei and Sheaufen to interact with guests. The wall between two bedrooms was also knocked down to reconfigure the space for a master bedroom, a study and a walk-in wardrobe.

LIVING ROOM

The patchwork sofa from Francfranc was the first piece of furniture the couple bought and it served as a starting point for the colour scheme in the living area.

Echoes of its hues can be found in the rest of the furnishings – the side table and the rug, for instance – and even the flooring, creating a sense of coherence and unity.

Another thread of blue in the living room comes in the form of the exuberant powder-blue wall by the dining table, which also works to anchor the space.

The dining chairs, which come in shades such as mustard and lime, reference the colours of the sofa, and are balanced with the neutral hues of the artwork and pendant lamps.

"We wanted six dining chairs in different colours, but that was overdoing it," says Tze Wei.



LEFT
The couple's accessories, displayed in a neat row on custom shelving, bring colour to the space.

RIGHT
The slanted legs of the furnishings give them a rather offbeat vibe that matches the cheery, funky apartment.



KITCHEN

The couple changed their minds about having a blackboard in the kitchen, opting instead for a Mount Fuji painting they bought online, that features every conceivable hue. The collectibles in the display case beside it, which are mostly from Japan, are equally colourful.

To accommodate the rainbow of colours, almost everything else is kept plain and neutral; this includes the white quartz countertops, white laminated cabinets, and the half tiled, half concrete backsplash. "The screed provides texture, but isn't too distracting," says Jack.

On the floor is Jack's pride and joy – a sea of hexagonal floor tiles in blue and white that extend from the apartment's entrance, letting guests know they are in for a colourful experience when they enter. The unique tiles were imported from Vietnam.

The jolt of colour adds to the kitchen's appeal for Tze Wei, who says it is his favourite part of the home.



RIGHT
The bi-fold windows above the kitchen counter facilitate interaction with guests and can keep cooking fumes out of the living area, though the couple confess that they have not closed them yet!



photo THREE-D CONCEPTWERKE







ABOVE, RIGHT
Bought from San Francisco, a clock adorned with "cutlery" in a rainbow of hues brightens the plain walls.

ABOVE, LEFT
The peek-a-boo partition, made with concrete blocks painted white, provides privacy for the living area without making the entrance area feel cramped or enclosed.

LEFT
Replacing the top half of the kitchen walls with glass allows the burst of colours in the space to be visible from the living and dining areas.

photo THREE-D CONCEPTWERKE

BEDROOM

The master bedroom has a more muted vibe, with wood hues and white walls making it clear that it is a place for rest.

The white and steel shades in its furnishings evoke the feel of an urban oasis and are a cooler take on contemporary decor, as opposed to a black-and-white palette. Adding some colour is the distressed green laminate from Lamitak cladding the entrance to the study. The laminated panels are scored with diagonal lines to link it visually to the doors of the walk-in wardrobe.

However, the couple can never stay too far away from colour, choosing a mint green and tangerine Oriental-style metal cabinet from Ikea for the study area.

The his-and-hers armchairs, upholstered in textured blue and green fabric, lend depth and cosiness to the space, echoing the colour palette of the living room's sofa.





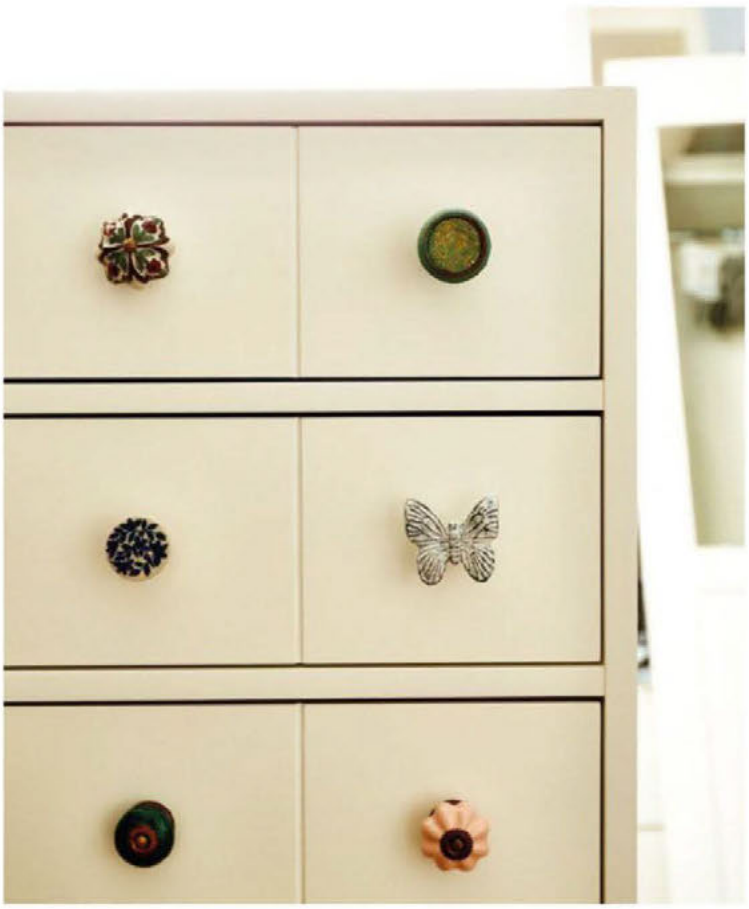
ABOVE
One of the couple's requirements for the study was a table where they could work side by side. They paired it with upholstered chairs from Comfort Design.

RIGHT
Swing doors with clear panels allow Sheaufen to peek into her walk-in wardrobe from the bedroom.

photos THREE-D CONCEPTWERKE







ABOVE
The bedroom platform hides space to store bedding.

LEFT
Coloured drawer knobs in various shades, shapes and sizes, dress up a simple cream-coloured dresser, which is one of Sheaufen's favourite items in her home.

FAR LEFT
The wall lighting feature in the bedroom, customised from metal pipes, adds an industrial, too-cool-for-school edge.

text KITTY CHEW photos WONG WEI LIANG art direction YEW XIN YI & LIM YI LING

WINNING DESIGN

The Abstract model rose as the most favourite design in the recently-concluded Rubine contest.



Here are the winners of the promo. Congratulations!

Wong Tack Leong
Tho Li Ming
Mohamed Khalied
Siti Shakira Ibrahim
Ahmad Farid
Pamela Chong Siaw Fong
Azlinawati Binti Shuhaimi
Yong Cheng Yew
Ng He Xiang
Te Chin Yong



In August, our readers were given the opportunity to win a Rubine SSE water heater by participating in a special contest held by Rubine in collaboration with Home & Decor.

To stand a chance to win a Rubine SSE water heater worth RM799, participants were to answer five simple questions and choose their favourite design from six different Rubine SSE models.

The contest concluded on 30 September and 10 winners were chosen. The design that received the most votes is the Abstract, which features geometric patterns against a black background.

Using a heating element technology from the UK, the Rubine SSE (Smart, Slim and Elegant) water heater has a three-in-one compact stop, flow and filter valve. It comes with an inverter silent pump, a DPDT Protection system and an Auto Water Flow Switch. These provide safety features such as automatic control and splash proof protection.

Thanks to its DC Inverter pump, it saves up to 60 per cent energy.

To find out more about the Rubine SSE water heater, visit www.rubine.com.my.

Zone your space with colour!

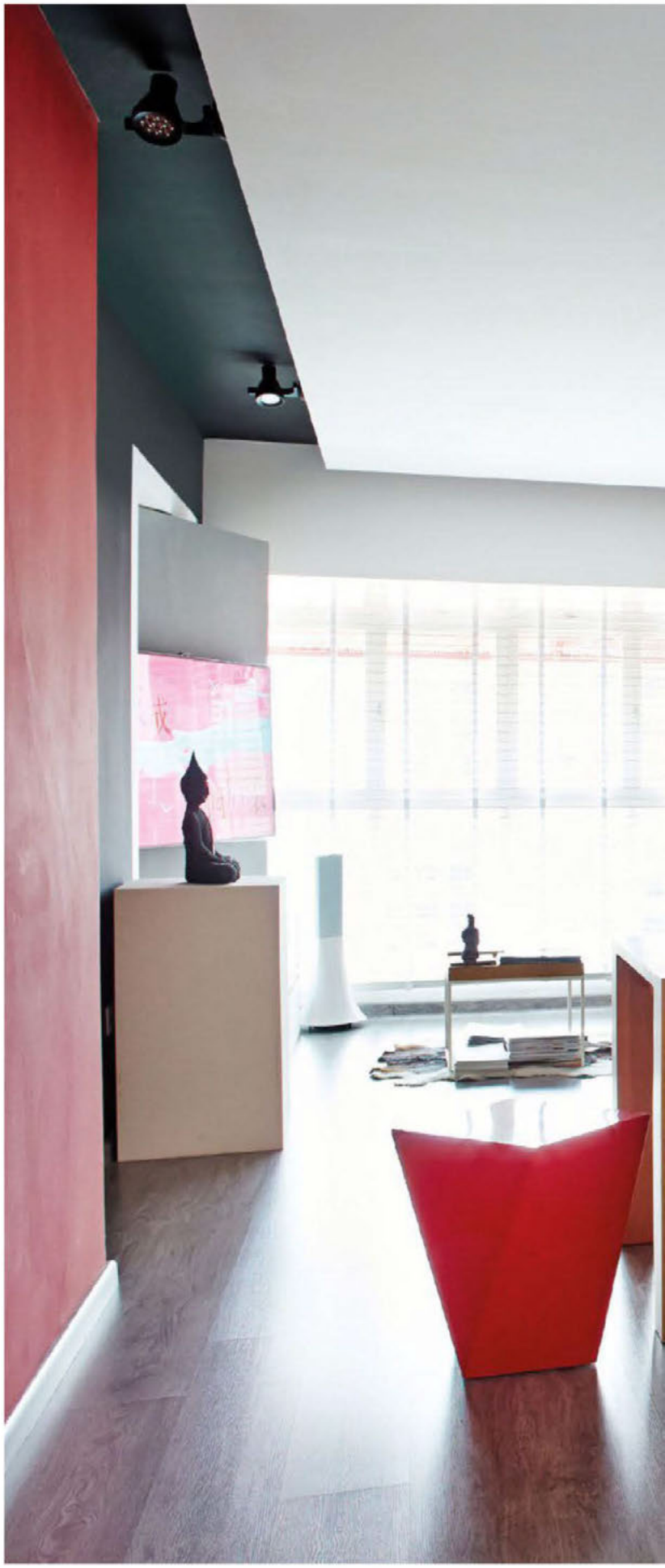
ZONED OUT

The unique concept of this home flaunts the homeowner's favourite colours, and puts his passion on show.

WHO
A bachelor in his late 30s

HOME
Five-room flat

SIZE
1,100sqf



RIGHT
Upon entering the home, a large structure that calls to mind a Polaroid print greets Danny; it also frames the space beyond.





The grey and white painted feature wall in the living area is inspired by overlapping frames, and also marks out space on the wall for displaying artwork.

Homeowner Danny Chong's bachelor pad was not only designed using his favourite colours – red and black – but its concept also hints at his professional and personal passion. He's a creative director in the advertising industry, and also a photographer. As such, interior designers Vincent Goi and Catherine Low of Hue D based the concept of the home on his love of photography.

All non-structural walls were torn down so that they would have maximum freedom in implementing the concept. Two core areas, named Lomography Walls and Dark Room, are defined using the colours red and black, with all other activity zones organised around them. The renovation cost under $100,000, excluding furnishings.



The kitchen has a unique design based on the idea of light and shadows. The two customised shades of red from Nippon Paint create subtle pattern on the wall.



The main colours of the apartment – red and black – meet in the corridor, creating a striking contrast.

The Lomography Walls form a red "box" that comprises the bathroom and concealed household shelter, next to the dining area.

Lomography, a style of photography, is about experimenting with exposure, colour and light, explain the designers. Along with this idea, they wanted the surrounding spaces (the kitchen, dining and living area) to reflect Danny's personality.

As such, a notion of "framing" is expressed in the living and dining area. At the entrance, the first thing you see is a suspended divider that separates it from the dining area, and frames the scene like a Polaroid print. This motif continues in the living area, where a feature wall has been painted with a design inspired by the overlapping of frames. "This also strategically marks out the spaces for hanging photographs, paintings or even clocks," says Vincent.

The play of light in photography is explored in the kitchen as well. "The counters and shelves are inspired by strokes of white light that can be seen in certain creative photography," he explains. The countertops, finished in white solid surfacing, have varying heights according to function.



The other zone, the Dark Room, is a black "box" that houses Danny's study and walk-in wardrobe. Named after the room in which photographers traditionally develop photos, the designers assigned this area as Danny's working space.

Dark laminate flooring was chosen for this area, as well as black paint for the ceiling to compress the space and create a cosier feel. The external walls of the Dark Room are painted black to visually mark it out and define the private zones at the same time.

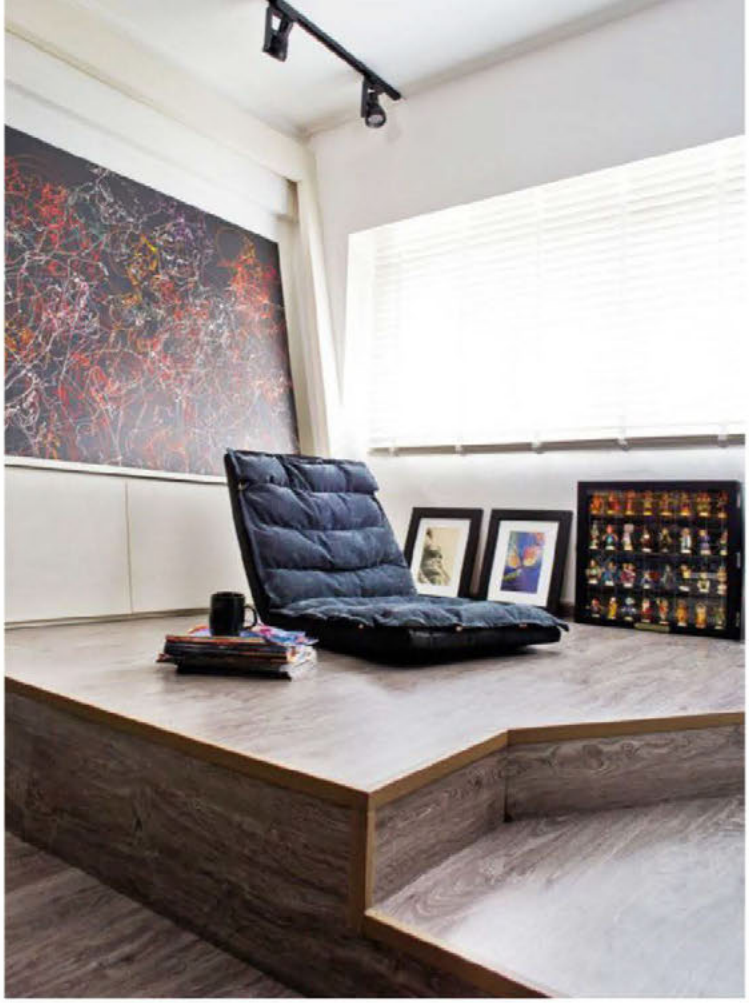
A rotating panel between his study and living area holds a large painting on one side and a flat-screen TV on the other.

This clever design allows Danny to have access to the TV screen when he's in the study.

ABOVE
Danny's study and spacious walk-in wardrobe are separated by sliding glass doors; this allows more light into both spaces, making them look bigger.

BELOW
A customised boutique-style display console in the walk-in wardrobe stores Danny's accessories.





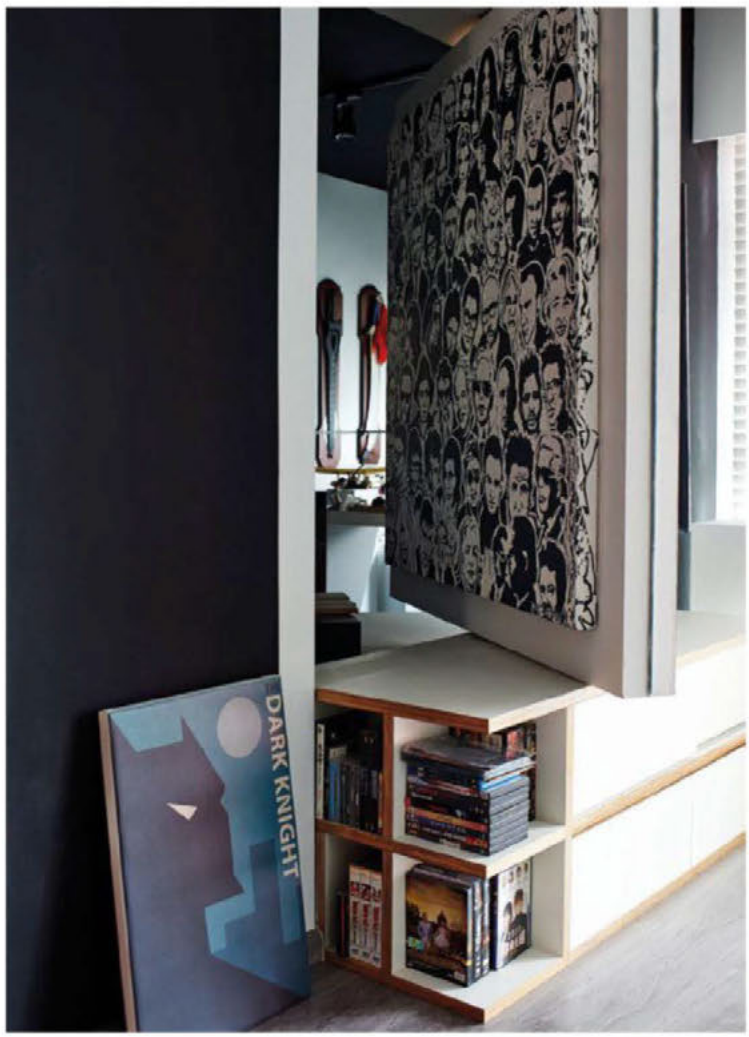
The rotating panel comes to good use when he and his friends hang out in the living room. "I deliberately flip the panel so that the TV screen faces the study; this encourages my friends to talk to me rather than watch TV," he laughs.

LEFT
A raised platform was built next to the windows in the master bedroom, which allows Danny to enjoy the view while he lounges.

BELOW
A rotating panel between the living area and study allows the TV to be used in either space.

LEFT, BELOW
The master bedroom has a monochromatic theme which goes well with the clean profiles of the furnishings.





Q&A

YOUR RENO & DECOR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

We answer your renovation and decorating questions with help from industry experts. E-mail questions to maghomedecor@sph.com.sg.

I live in a flat. Lately, some concrete pieces have been falling from my ceiling. What is causing this problem, and how do I fix it?

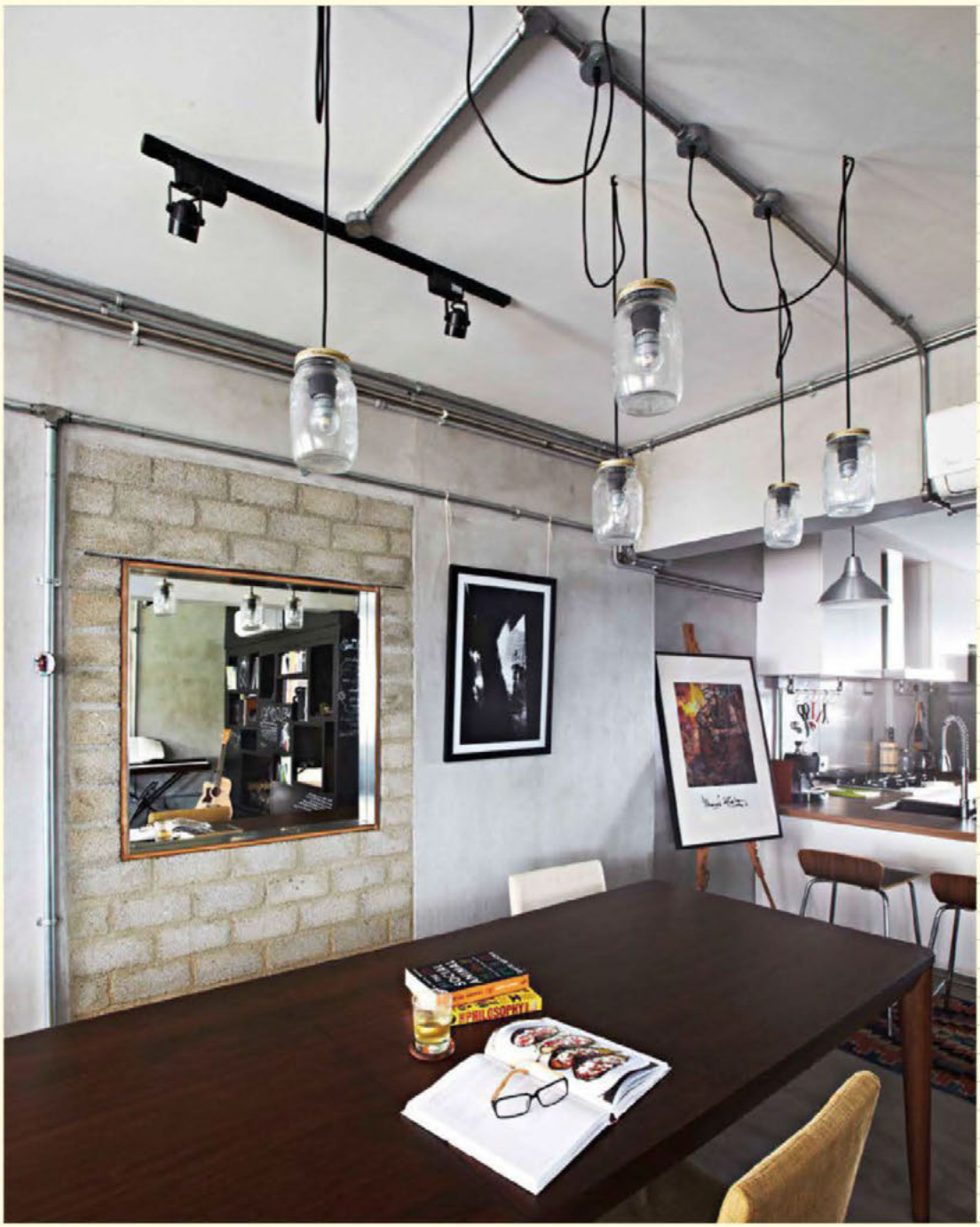
This is known as spalling, and it happens when steel bars embedded in the ceiling start to corrode, causing the concrete to crack and fall off in chunks. This usually happens in old buildings.

This deterioration is called carbonation, and it could be caused by a humid environment, where moisture and carbon dioxide enter the concrete and cause the steel parts to rust.

Spalling concrete won't affect the structural integrity of the building if it's repaired quickly; leave it and it might spread and weaken the building structure.

A general contractor should be able to repair your ceiling.

To prevent this from happening again, we recommend painting your ceiling with good-quality paint every three to five years, to seal cracks and also holes that have no use, and to provide sufficient ventilation for the area.



photography DARREN CHANG design PROJ.B STUDIO

My living room window faces the common corridor and lets in the afternoon sun. What window treatments will keep the room bright, yet provide privacy and block out heat?

Traditional window treatments such as blinds and curtains shield your home from the sun, and provide privacy, but block out the light. For a cool and bright, yet private room, your best solution would be to install window films.

They are barely noticeable and are attached to your windows with adhesive. 3M Sun Control window films reportedly block up to 90 per cent of heat, 93 per cent of glare, and 99 per cent of ultraviolet rays.

For more privacy during the day, "install any 3M Sun Control window film with a metallic component. It works like those in police interrogation rooms – in the day, when the room is darker, people cannot look through your window due to the reflection. But at night, when the room's lights are switched on, you'll need curtains for privacy," says Josephine Heng of Jestac, the authorised distributor and applicator of 3M window films.



photography TAN WEI TE design THE INTERARCH DESIGN

Where can I customise a home-address sign?

You don't have to be a landed-property owner to personalise your home with an address or name plate – you can do one for your apartment, too.

As a house-warming gift to a client who lives in a HDB maisonette, designer Arjan Twilhaar had a customised design printed on an acrylic panel, which was then mounted by the door (pictured).

You can cut your logo and address out of acrylic and mount that on another sheet of acrylic for a pop-out effect, says Arjan. He sends his laser-cutting projects to a sign-maker who cuts from stainless steel, wood and acrylic.

Why not try to make one yourself? It could be a fun project with the kids. You could make a stencil of the address and paint it on a piece of wood, or use stickers and decals to decorate the plate. Art-supply and craft shops should carry the supplies.

"Mount the address plate with some space between the wall and the plate to prevent the growth of mould behind the plate – especially if it's done in wood," says Arjan. ●

I am planning to build a shelter that will extend the side of my home. Which materials will weather the elements well?

In choosing the right material for your shelter, consider factors such as the design of your current structure, your budget, and the complexity of the construction.

Selina Tay, the principal designer at Collective Designs, says that she usually tries to match the design of the new shelter with the existing roof of the home and its surroundings.

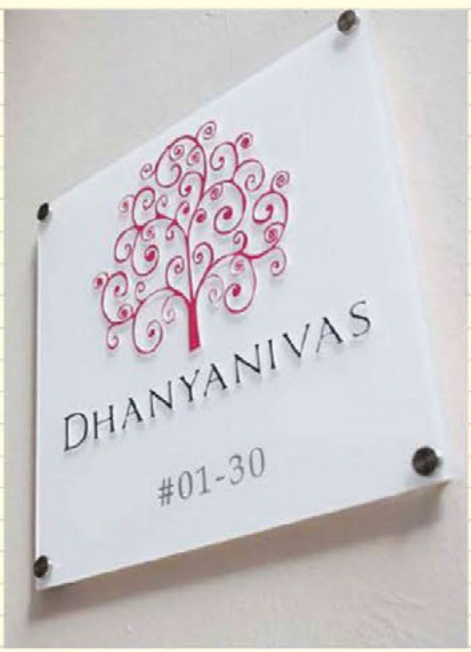
The least expensive material you can use is polycarbonate; it's lightweight, and there are various colours to select from. However, it won't last long.

The material is "difficult to clean, becomes brittle after long exposure to heat and sun, and will last a maximum of five years if you don't mind it looking yucky," says Selina.

"You can also choose from various types of metal," she adds. "Another option is old-fashioned roof tiles, but you will need to consider the gradient of your shelter."

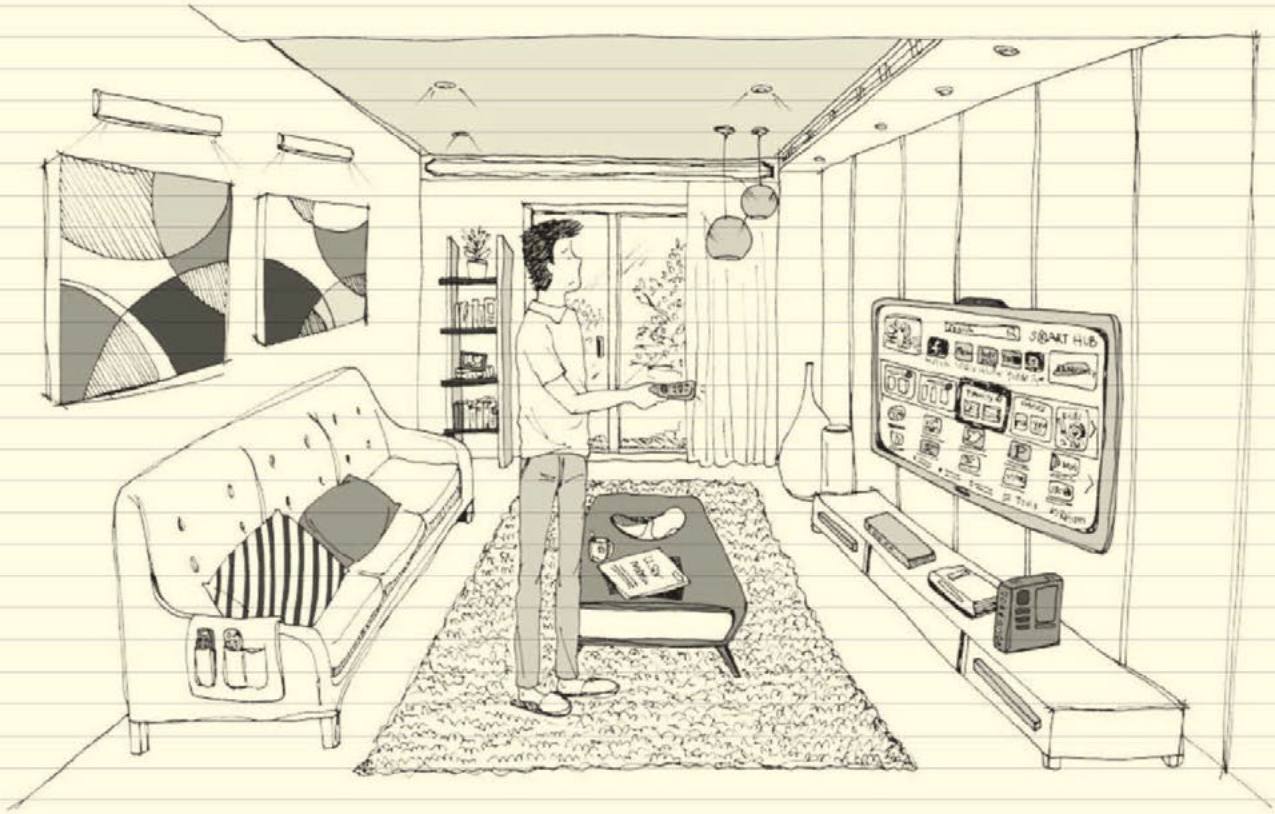
Glass is common, but expensive, and you will need a professional engineer to endorse the structure under the Building and Construction Authority's regulations.

"Concrete can be used too, but as it will be a messy process, it is better for new rebuilds," Selina says.



photography JUSTIN LOH design AIDEN T

text REBECKKA WONG



MORE THAN JUST A SCREEN

Confused by the Smart TVs that are slowly taking over the market? This is the guide for you.

What's a Smart TV?

Unlike regular television sets, Smart TVs feature built-in computer processors and a Wi-Fi receiver that allows you to surf the Internet.

Like a tablet or a mobile phone, they come with a smart interface loaded with apps that allow you to play games and even check your 4D results. Some even have built-in cameras.

Do I have to pay much more for a Smart TV as compared to a regular TV set?

A basic TV set can cost from as low as $250 for a 32-inch screen to over $3,500, depending on its size. Smart TVs start from $450 and can go up to $8,000, or more.

Is it difficult to set one up?

Not at all! Like a computer, a Smart TV comes equipped with Ethernet ports (also known as Ethernet jacks or sockets) and wireless settings, which means that as long as you've attached the Ethernet cable to the port, or if it is within range of your wireless router, you're good to go!

Do I still need a cable box?

Yes, you do. While a Smart TV lets you surf the Net and stream content from your computer, it still requires a cable box for you to receive content from your cable TV provider.

Does having a Smart TV affect the picture quality of the TV set?

No, it doesn't. The picture quality of a TV set is determined by the type of TV you have; whether it is a high-definition (HD) television set, or a 4K resolution Ultra High-Definition (UHD) television set. Just like regular TVs, Smart TVs come with different levels of picture quality as well.

Do I really need one?

That really depends on your lifestyle. While most Smart TVs come with a barrage of features that will make finding information more convenient, they're not exactly necessary.

In fact, if you're not looking for built-in features or wireless connectivity to your laptop, but just want access to Internet streaming services such as Youtube, Hulu and Netflix, we'd suggest getting a set-top box or a streaming stick.

Set-top boxes such as Apple TV, Roku and Chromecast provide both paid and unpaid "apps" for more channels and movies. You can find such units at Sim Lim Square.



photo SAMSUNG



photo LG

THE BEST CONTROLS

Wireless keyboard and mouse

This will really transform your television set into a computer screen, and makes typing a breeze. Not only does it allow you to surf the Net with ease, but it also you can also browse through the Smart interface easily.

The only downside is that most television sets come with either mini versions of a keyboard, or none at all. It would be best to purchase them separately.

KEY FEATURES

Smart interface

Similar to a tablet or mobile phone, a Smart TV comes with its own operating system that allows you to head to a "home page" where you can access apps, games, the Internet and other functions. The interface varies with different brands, but remains relatively user-friendly.

Ability to access the Internet

A flash-embedded Web browser is one of the key features of a Smart TV and allows you to surf the Net on your TV screen.

Downloadable apps

Some Smart TV apps come with the television set, others have to be downloaded from the app store. The great thing about Smart TV apps is that even though they vary from brand to brand, they're free of charge and there is a huge variety. Games, news sites, and apps for Youtube and Twitter can be downloaded through your television set.



photo ATLAS

Remotes

Remote controls for Smart TVs have improved greatly over the years. From a cumbersome version that allows navigation only through arrow keys, remotes have now developed into wands. Similar to the Wii controller, you can control your television set with just a flick of your wrist.



photo SAMSUNG

Hand gestures

Some Smart TVs now have built-in cameras that allow the television set to recognise certain hand gestures. For example, balling your hand into a fist could be a command for your Smart TV to switch off.

Mobile phone

Some Smart TV developers have also created apps that turn your mobile phone into a remote control. Such apps also allow you to display the screen of your mobile phone or tablet on the television screen.

text AMANDA JAYNE LEE illustration LEXIN WONG

In The Know Malaysia High Tea



Familiarise yourselves with local delicacies. The "In The Know" Malaysia high tea at Serena Brasserie, InterContinental hotel includes a sumptuous afternoon tasting of Malay, Indian and Chinese traditional cuisine, including local Malay desserts. The high tea will also include international dishes of sashimi, homemade smoked salmon and various other delicacies. Dine-in guests will enjoy an exclusive al-fresco cooking demonstration with recipe handouts. The high tea sessions runs every Saturday from 12.00pm to 4.00pm and is priced at RM72++ per adult and RM36++ per child (six to 12 years old).

Available at InterContinental hotel, 165, Jalan Ampang, Kuala Lumpur, tel: +603-2161-1111.



Foldable sharpener

This unique knife sharpener allows you to rotate and fold its' safe ergonomic handles, turning it into a compact unit for easy storage. Rota is the first knife sharpener launched by Joseph Joseph.

For more information, visit www.josephjoseph.com

Christmas Coasters



Owner and Creative Director of Rifle Paper Co, Anna Bond introduces four whimsical characters to our tables. They include Pink Lady, Bloody Mary, White Russian and Brandy Alexander from a Royal Cocktail Coaster set. Inspired by vintage cards, Anna's illustrations are a must-have to decorate your table with this Christmas.

For more information, visit www.dsyr.com



Essence of Christmas

Make your reservations at Sheraton's signature restaurant, Essence. On Christmas day, they will offer more than 120 mouth-watering local and international specialties! Brunch presents classic and contemporary dishes including Roasted Herbs Brushed Whole Turkey with Chestnut Stuffing, Roasted Australian Prime Rib with Yorkshire Pudding, Fillet of Atlantic Cod with Braised Rhubarb & Sauteed Assorted Mushrooms and Char Grilled Brine Young Fennel. Also don't forget to purchase your Christmas goodies and festive treats such as gingerbread house and Yule Log from Toastina Café and Bar, which are available from December 1 to December 24.

For more information, visit www.sheratonimperialkualalumpur.com



Spectacular Bauble

Nothing speaks of a cheerful Christmas quite like this clever festive bauble from Crabtree & Evelyn's 2014 Seasonal Spectacular. It not only functions as a decorative piece on the tree, but it contains 40 grams of individually wrapped chocolate fudge pieces, traditionally made from West Country of England.

For more information, visit www.crabtree-evelyn.com.my

Century-old Royalty

Royal Selangor's Chateau collection draws inspiration from the creativity of the 14th to 17th century Renaissance period. It comprises elegant highball glass, whiskey tumbler, bottle coasters, champagne flutes, wine goblets, decanters and an ice bucket. Various classical motifs including circles and geometric shapes adorned the delicate pewter lattices. These graceful, yet, slim pewter stems hold up perfectly shaped glass cups which are delicate-yet-elegant.

The Chateau Collection is available from Royal Selangor outlets.





Lucky Strike!

Seeking contemporary accessories to add to your kitchen? The Olive Oil and Vinegar Container from the Lucky Strike Collection are sold in a pair. Made from fire-glazed ceramic, its glossy exterior sets it apart from a real bowling pin.

For more information, visit www.corpick.com

Rocking Bowl

Crafted by top German craftsmen and conceptualised by leading European designers, Anna Rocking Bowl from Blomus is made from the finest quality stainless steel. The solid and shiny stainless steel fruit bowl is able to rock without tipping over. The bowl can be lifted by holding onto its handle inspired by a fruit stem. ●

For more information, visit www.blomus.com



text NG YI XIANG



A MOVING STORY

Shifting to a new home can be an exciting but extremely stressful event. Pick up tips from relocation experts on how to make the transition as smooth as possible.

You've finally bought your new home. Now comes the headache – coordinating The Big Move. From furniture to clothes, fragile vases to expensive art, everything that you intend to take to your new residence needs to be packed, and then unpacked – carefully.

Now is the perfect time to ask yourself – do you really need to lug everything over and incur expensive moving costs? Shalom Movers, one of the biggest moving companies in the industry, usually charges based on the volume of items, while some companies go by the number of trips.

Although professional players always insist on a no-obligation visit by their sales team to give you an accurate quote, the rule of thumb for deliveries is about $220 for one trip in a 10-foot covered truck, or $350 to $500 for a 15-foot truck.

"Stay motivated by remembering that it's going to be faster and cheaper if you declutter first," advises Georgina Wong, chief executive officer of Asian Professional Organisers, which specialises in helping clients with decluttering and their organising needs.

She suggests using the F.A.S.T. method to help you divide your possessions into four piles: Forward or donate items to someone else; Action things immediately; Store or file for reference; and Trash or junk anything that can't be repaired.

Check out local resources for donating, recycling and junk removal, such as your local town council, the Salvation Army or websites such as www.sgfreecycle.org or www.letsnotforgetewaste.sg/be-involved/e-cycling-points.

Now that you're left with the absolute essentials, follow these tips:

1. PREPARE AN INVENTORY OF YOUR FURNITURE AND THEIR MEASUREMENTS

As you purchase new items or furniture, don't forget to update your list, along with their prices. This will become a handy guide for when you plan for your home-contents insurance.

Get your floor plan from your property agent, HDB or a private developer. "Check if your furniture pieces can fit – and most importantly, if they can be transported in a lift if it is an apartment," says Georgina.

If they have to use the stairs, movers and delivery staff will charge extra for every level they have to climb.

If you intend to reuse your

curtains, make sure the length and width will fit your new windows. Some older HDB flats have higher ceilings than the new ones, while some condo units boast airy, high ceilings which require much longer curtains.

2. CHOOSE YOUR MOVER CAREFULLY

Avoid movers who promise you a suspiciously good deal, especially over the phone without even seeing the items. When Jason Lim, 37, hired his first mover seven years ago, he needed only a few big items such as his massage chair and bicycles to be transported, as his new furniture would be delivered directly to the new home.

Most movers quoted him a flat fee of $300 for one trip, except one who offered him $250 based on the items he listed. "The boss said it was unnecessary to make a trip down for an assessment as I had such few items, so I just took his word for it," recalls Jason.

Unfortunately, on moving day, two workers who appeared to be freelance movers turned up late, complained about having to carry the massage chair and wanted $100 more, threatening to forego the job. In order to avoid further delay in moving, Jason agreed to pay them an extra $50.

Moral of the story: Never trust what is promised over the phone and insist on an assessment visit and a quotation in black and white. Check with at least three companies.

3. FOR CONDO-DWELLERS, SUBMIT YOUR MOVING FORM TO YOUR CURRENT AND NEW CONDO'S MANAGEMENT OFFICE

There is no rule about when you can move in and out of your HDB flat, but movers are allowed to start work at condos only during weekdays from 9am to 5pm, and up to 1pm on Saturdays. Moving on Sundays and public holidays is strictly prohibited. Either the resident or the moving company must make the application at least a week in advance, together with a refundable deposit of $1,000. Otherwise, the security guards will not allow your movers to commence work.

Make sure your movers line the lift with the padding provided, so as to avoid damaging the lift and thus forfeiting your deposit.

4. APPLY FOR RESIDENT CAR PARKING LABELS, TRANSPONDERS AND ACCESS CARDS EARLY

With vendors having to make multiple trips to take measurements and make deliveries, it will be more convenient to use parking lots meant for residents, rather than visitors, says Georgina.

5. PLAN WHAT GOES INTO WHICH ROOM

A week before moving, plan what will go into which room. If you require boxes, ask how many will be provided as part of the deal, and how much you have to pay for more. TSR Movers charges $3 per box, but if you return them in good condition, they are fully refundable.

Colour-code the floor plan and the packed boxes so that the moving company can put them in their designated rooms without needing to wait for instructions. Apply colour-coding to your furniture, too. This also prevents having to reposition furniture unnecessarily. "Remember, the less moving around of furniture, the fewer scratches to your floors," says Georgina.

6. PREPARE A SUITCASE OF ESSENTIALS FOR MOVING DAY

Georgina recommends that you include:

- Your identity cards and chequebook
- Change of clothes
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Toilet paper
- Battery chargers
- Extension cords and plug adaptors
- Tea, coffee and medicine – whatever you will need once the removal van leaves.



7. CLEAR OUT YOUR OLD FRIDGE AND PREPARE YOUR CUPBOARDS AT YOUR NEW HOME

Throw out all perishables, and defrost and clean your freezer and refrigerator before the movers arrive. Once you have the new house keys, clean the shelves and insides of cupboards ahead of moving day, but don't bother with the floors yet. "Aim to empty the boxes as soon as they arrive – at least place them in their respective rooms," says Georgina.

8. PREPARE AN EMERGENCY MOVING KIT

The day before moving, stash this emergency moving kit (with the following items) in a sling bag or workman's belt:

- Tape measure
- Masking tape
- Marker pen
- Cutting knife
- Mobile phone and charger or spare battery
- Aspirin and plasters
- Spare set of keys for new and old house.

9. DO NOT PACK THESE ITEMS

You'll still need these, so don't pack them just yet:

- Rubbish bags
- Broom, dustpan and mop
- Instruction manuals and guarantees for appliances you're leaving behind – the new owner will need them
- Internal door keys, access cards and car park transponders
- Receipts for the landlord or property agent
- Tins of old paint
- Pet food and carrying basket.

"Collect your pets after moving has been completed," says Georgina.

10. MAKE A FINAL CHECK!

Check that nothing has been overlooked, such as your cable TV box, items in locked drawers, or even bicycles. Then it's time to clean up before handing over your old place.

"If it is a rented property, remember to remove nails, patch up walls, replace light bulbs and take pictures to document the condition when you handed it over," reminds Georgina. ●

Colour-code the floor plan and the packed boxes so that the moving company can put them in their designated rooms, without needing to wait for instructions.

YOU BREAK, YOU PAY?

Not necessarily. Sticking a "Fragile" sticker helps, but it all depends on how well the item is protected and how careful the movers are.

Most movers we spoke to were unwilling to commit to the amount of liability they may cover without a prior assessment.

In addition, if you chose to pack your items on your own to save on paying for movers, it can be hard to determine if the breakage occurred due to your insufficient padding or the movers' carelessness.

One solution is to pack regular items yourself, but pay extra for the movers to pack your breakables. Also check with them to see if they are experienced in handling special items such as pianos and safes.

Movers will usually disassemble and reassemble your furniture, but some we spoke to were unwilling to do so for Ikea furniture. Most will move the entire shelving unit as it is; do take that into consideration as it adds to your volume and you may require additional trips.

Finally, check the fine print of the contract before you sign. Different companies offer different compensation. Others may offer more compensation, but the amount is probably factored into their higher charges.

If you have expensive items such as paintings or fragile vases, professional movers recommend that you take out extra insurance, subject to an assessment, which can be arranged via the movers. Again, check around to compare the amount of coverage before you commit.

text STELLA THNG photos INMAGINE

buying guide

YOUR ONE-STOP RESOURCE FOR PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

MALAYSIA

Acacia Fine Fabrics
tel: +603-4252-3378
www.acaciafabrics.com

Aeon Index Living Sdn. Bhd.
Lot No.LG-30, 31 & 33,
Lower Ground Floor,
IOI City Mall
Lebuh IRC, IOI Resort City
Putrajaya
www.indexlivingmall.com.my

A-Jung Electric Sdn Bhd
Suite E-06-08,
Plaza Mont Kiara,
Kuala Lumpur
Tel: +603-6201-9101

Alpha
tel: +603-5740-6666
www.alphamalaysia.com

Apex
For store listing, go to
www.apexboutique.com

BoConcept
T112 Bangsar Shopping Centre,
Kuala Lumpur
tel: +603-2011-0178

Bosch
www.bosch-home.com.my

Caesarstone
www.caesarstone.com.sg

Eastern Decorator Sdn Bhd WHITE ROOM (Eastern Decorator Sdn Bhd)
Suite E-3A, Level 3A,
Corporate Bulding (Block E),
Southgate Centre, No2, Jalan
Dua, Off Jalan Chan Sow Lin,
Kuala Lumpur
Tel: +603-9222-3488

Electrolux
tel: 1300-88-1122

Feruni Ceramiche
12 Jalan 213
Petaling Jaya
tel: +603-7784-7277

Goodrich Global
M-2-2 Block M
Plaza Damas Phase II
Kuala Lumpur
tel: +603-6201-5757

Gudang Damansara
S15 Bangsar Shopping
Centre
Kuala Lumpur
tel: +603-2092-2618

Guocera
5th Floor Wisma Kemajuan
No 2 jalan 19/1B
Petaling Jaya
Tel: +603-7958-7922

Harvey Norman
For store listing, go to
www.harveynorman.com.my

Hafele
18 Jalan Juruhebah U1/50,
Glenmarie
Selangor
tel: +603-5569-2526

Hitachi
Suite17.3, Level 17
Menara IMC, Jalan Sultan
Ismail
Kuala Lumpur
tel: +603-2031-8751

Ikea
2 Jalan PJU7/2
Mutiara Damansara
Petaling Jaya
tel: +603-7726-7777

Interfal Marketing
158 Jalan Maarof
Kuala Lumpur
tel: +603-2093-9588

Janine
S112 Bangsar
Shopping Centre
Kuala Lumpur
tel: +603-2094-9530

J & J Chesters Malaysia Sdn Bhd
Block B-0-1, Megan Avenue
1, 189 Jalan Tun Razak
Kuala Lumpur
tel: +603-2166-4121

KDK
3rd Floor,
No 15 Jalan Tandang
Petaling Jaya
tel: +603-7785-5011

Kimgres Marketing Sdn Bhd
Lot 5, Jalan Kilang/Jalan 217
Petaling Jaya
tel: +603-7783-9811

Kitch
G16 Bangunan
Perdagangan D7
800 Jalan Sentul
Kuala Lumpur
tel: +6018-599-8233

Kitchenaid
tel: +603-7877-5216

Lazzoni
154 Jalan Maarof
Kuala Lumpur
tel: +603+2201-3323

Legrand
Lot 1888, Jalan KPB7,
Kawasan Perindustrian
Balakong, Selangor
tel: +603-8962-3333

LG
tel: 1800-822-822
www.lg.com

Lightcraft
145 Jalan Sungai Besi
Kuala Lumpur
tel: +603-9222-2413

Ligne Roset
S3 Pamper Floor
Starhill Gallery
Kuala Lumpur
tel: +603-2710-3388

Linds Furniture
162 Jalan Maarof
Kuala Lumpur
tel: +603-2094-6055

Lorenzo
For store listing, go to
www.lorenzo-international.com

Marco Corporation (M) Sdn Bhd
2-2nd Floor, Jalan
Segambut,
Kuala Lumpur
Tel: +603-4043-3111

Metrojaya
www.metrojaya.com.my

Miele
Menara Kencana Petroleum
Solaris Dutamas
Kuala Lumpur
tel: +603-6205-3899

MML (Malaysian Mosaics Sdn Bhd
1A Jalan 205,
Off Jalan Tandang
Petaling Jaya
tel: +603-7718-7333

Molecule
6.49.02 Pavilion KL
Kuala Lumpur
tel: +603-2148-3300

Muji
5.10.00 Pavilion KL
Kuala Lumpur
tel: +603-2141-0223

Namu Haus
3 Jalan Timur
Petaling Jaya
tel: +603-7932-3999

Nippon Paint
tel: 1800-88-2663
www.nipponpaint.com.my

Niro Ceramic (M) Sdn Bhd
Lot 2, Persiaran Sultan
Section 15
Petaling Jaya
tel: +603-5033-9333

Panasonic
Lot 10, Jalan 13/2
Petaling Jaya
tel: +603-7953-7600

Rinnai
D2-3-G & D2-3-1,
Block D2, Pusat
Perdagangan Danau 1,
Jalan PJU1A/46,
Ara Damansara
tel: +603-7832-0037

Rubine
Fiamma Tradings Sdn Bhd
WismaFiamma
No. 20, Jalan 7A/62A,
Bandar Menjalara,
Kuala Lumpur
tel: +603-6279-8888

Pensonic
tel: 1800-881-770
www.pensonic.com

Robinsons
The Gardens Mall
Kuala Lumpur
tel: +603-2089-1188

Samsung
Suite E-09-01,
Level 9 East Wing
ICON Jalan Tun Razak
Kuala Lumpur
tel: +603-2165-0000

Sharp
No 1A Persiaran Kuala
Langat Section 27
Shah Alam
tel: +603-5102-5311

Signature Kitchen
Lot 24 Jalan Teknologi
Taman Sains Selangor 1
Kota Damansara
tel: +603-6286-7000

Space Furniture
3-12 The Intermark Mall
Kuala Lumpur
tel: +603-2166-2212

Stadler Form-Blue Orange Resources Sdn Bhd
Storage Systems
15-2-3, Megan Corporate
Park, Block B, Jalan 1/125E,
Taman Desa Petaling,
Kuala Lumpur
Tel: +603-9057-7933

Teka
tel: +603-7620-1600

Terracotta Tiles
15 Jalan Pendidik U1/31
Hicom Glenmarie
Shah Alam
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The same goes to the open shelf that displays an array of cookbooks in the kitchen. Placed strategically around a kitchen counter/island, chefs at home can store recipe books away easily. It is a conversation-starter during gatherings, so look forward to the exchange of recipes with family and friends. ●



1 An open-shelf displays a variety of cookbooks.

2 Versatile glass cabinets allow you to decorate your kitchen with book covers and diningware.

3 A photo montage fives you the freedom to create your very own timeline.





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